









## **SOME TEXTUAL DIFFICULTIES IN SHAKESPEARE**

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SOME  
TEXTUAL DIFFICULTIES  
IN SHAKESPEARE

BY  
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SOME TEXTUAL DIFFICULTIES  
IN SHAKESPEARE



# SOME TEXTUAL DIFFICULTIES IN SHAKESPEARE

## RUNAWAY'S EYES

*Juliet.* Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,  
Towards Phoebus' lodging: such a waggoner  
As Phaeton would whip you to the west,  
And bring in cloudy night immediately.  
Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,  
That runaways' eyes may wink, and Romeo  
Leap to these arms, untalk'd of and unseen. . . .  
(Romeo and Juliet, iii, 2, 6, *Globe ed.*)

MORE time and effort seem to have been spent on this crux than upon any other line in Shakespeare. In Furness' *Variorum* edition of the play, a crown octavo volume, twenty-eight pages of fine print are devoted to a review of the attempts that have been made to clear up the meaning; it occupies, in fact, the whole index to the play. The question which has been so long argued is — What does the “runaways” of the First Folio mean? And should it be printed *runaway's* or *runaways'*? In what sense also, or in what connection, is this winking to be understood?

Gollancz says that *runaways' eyes* is “the main difficulty of the passage, which has been,

## 2 SOME TEXTUAL DIFFICULTIES IN SHAKESPEARE

perhaps, the greatest crux or puzzle in Shakespeare." R. Grant White, in his *Shakespeare's Scholar*, p. 373, says: "The error will probably remain forever uncorrected unless a word which I venture to suggest seems as unexceptionable to others as it does to me." He then suggests *rumour's eyes*. Professor Charles F. Johnson, in his *Shakespeare and his critics* (1909) says: "In some cases, like 'that runaways eyes may wink,' in "Romeo and Juliet," it is impossible to hit upon a satisfactory reading, though we should like exceedingly to know who 'runaway' was. The conjecture 'rumour's eyes' is not altogether satisfactory, and the question is insoluble."

White, who at first felt certain that it should be edited *rumour's*, later changed his view to *noonday's*, while Hudson, on the other hand, printed it *rumour's* (1880). Thus the struggle with the passage has veered back and forth from the time of Theobald (1733) up to the present day. Our ancestors have seen this puzzling word of the Folio altered by editors in all sorts of ways. Knight's note in his pictorial edition will give a slight idea of the trouble:

"This passage has been a perpetual source of contention to the commentators. Their difficulties are well represented by Warburton's question: 'What run-aways are these whose eyes Juliet is wishing to be stopped?' Warburton says *Phoebus* is the runaway, Steevens

proves that *Night* is the runaway. Douce thinks that Juliet is the runaway. Monck Mason is confident that the passage ought to be, ‘that *Renomy’s* eyes may wink,’ Renomy being a new personage created out of the French *Renommée*, and answering, we suppose, to the ‘Rumour’ of Spenser.” Knight then adopts *unawares*, the suggestion of a compositor named Jackson. Others, of the present day, think that “runaways” are prying spectators on the street but yet wonder whether, after all, the word may not mean the steeds of the sun whose eyes will wink at sunset.

More serious than this change in the interpretation of the word itself is the fact that, in the hope of wresting sense out of the passage as a whole, the words are cut up into quite different sentences in various editions, the editor ignoring the punctuation of the First Folio entirely and putting a period here and a semi-colon there as he sees a chance to make something else out of it; and this effort is still going on. Neilson’s edition, for instance (1909), has gone back to a sentence division quite different from that of the Globe text of 1895 long considered standard by Shakespeare scholars generally. It must be evident however that any ingenious effort with exclamation points, periods and commas must be vain so long as we remain in the dark as to the sense of the one word which gives the point of view of the whole passage. As so much of the text is in-

volved, and that in the eloquent climactic passage where Juliet expectantly awaits the coming of the husband she has just married, it is a point that will be well worth settling permanently.

In starting out, let us keep one fact to the fore: Shakespeare was always true to *human nature* in any set of circumstances. He did not deal in elaborate mythological allusions and ingenious figures of speech in and for themselves; his expressions are such as will throw the deepest and most searching light upon the human heart, and that with an especial regard for the character speaking. Second: he does not jump quickly from one figure of speech to another with such mere liveliness of fancy as many critics think. He did this advisedly according to what might be accomplished by it; and in other cases he shows a remarkable faculty for sticking to the subject, so to speak, in long comparisons which are especially calculated to throw complete and dwelling light on the spirit of the speaker. He did this especially at those places where he wished to engage our minds for a longer space upon some point important in the action or in our conception of the character. The present is a case in point. Shakespeare fully expected, when he wrote this passage, that because he had paved the way and thrown about the word so many figurative expressions, all tending to the same point of view, we would understand the

sense of “runaway’s” at once and gather the beauty of this way of saying it. Being of this nature, it is a passage which I might explain quickly by internal evidence alone; but as it is a case where scholarship has been at work, almost two hundred years, any seeming solution of mine would naturally be received with skepticism even though it were plausible. I must therefore not only prove it internally but prove it again by reference to other passages in the plays which show Shakespeare’s natural point of view in just such cases as Juliet’s.

As all lovers of Shakespeare are not supposed to be perfect in Elizabethan English, we shall set “runaway’s” aside a moment while we dispose of the word “wink.” This word, in Shakespeare’s time, was not confined to its present usual meaning of shutting the eyes momentarily. It meant also the shutting of the eyes with the intention of keeping them closed, in which sense it is used repeatedly by Shakespeare. This is well enough understood by Shakespeare scholars, and was known to all those editors who have made an attempt to read the passage.

Let us now turn our attention to “Henry V,” v, 2, 327. We here see Shakespeare dealing with the subject of woman’s modesty. Henry is trying to win the hand of Katherine the French princess. He is now conversing with Burgundy upon her reticence. Burgundy describes the princess as “a maid yet rosed over

with the virgin crimson of modesty." Her maiden modesty and backwardness to consent to marriage he explains as due to "her naked seeing self." To which Henry replies, "Yet they do *wink* and yield, as love is blind and enforces."

There cannot, of course, be any doubt as to the meaning of *wink* as used in this connection. We see then that Shakespeare, wishing to put stress on maiden modesty, takes the standpoint that it will only yield under conditions of darkness. Now Juliet is in a like position in regard to what she calls love's amorous rites. She is waiting secretly in the shadows of her father's orchard for the appearance of the husband whom she has married but a few hours before and whom she is to receive in her own chamber for the first time that night. She was scarce acquainted with him when she married him; she is a maid like Katherine though married. We find her modesty accentuated by having her look forward to the time when "strange love, grown bold, think true love acted simple modesty." At present, as she waits anxiously in the orchard, she has neither grown bold nor does the act of love seem modest to her. Here then we find two parallel cases as regards ante-nuptial modesty, and in both cases we see the word "*wink*" chosen. In Katherine's case there is no question as to its referring to darkness, and the *wink* refers to her own eyes. We shall therefore conclude,

tentatively, that in Juliet's case it is the same. It is her own eyes that are supposed to wink; but as darkness is just falling it allows of this winking, or blinding, being accomplished in a different way.

But if it is her own sight she is referring to, we now have to find a fit meaning for *runaway's*, because the text reads, "that runaway's eyes may wink." If we are going to assume that it is her eyes that are referred to, then she is the runaway; and now the question arises: In what sense may she be considered a runaway? That she has simply run away from home, being out in her father's orchard, is hardly satisfactory; it does not fit the elaborate figure of speech. To regard her as a runaway merely because she went secretly to Friar Laurence to be married proves equally futile when put to the test. For we are still left with the problem of finding out how or why, in that sense of running away, she should wish her eyes to close or wink? She is contemplating actual darkness in the oncoming of night, from which it will be seen that her having merely run away from home for a while that day does not apply with any sense to her present vein of thought. Even the poorest of critics, with few exceptions, have seen that the solution here is not to come from a very literal point of view. Whatever Shakespeare's meaning may be, the word has some figurative application which is more illuminating.

Let us turn next to "All's Well that Ends Well." The chaste Diana, whose Italian upbringing, like Juliet's, has made womanly modesty the one great meaning of life to her, finds herself contemplating a crucial moment. She is dealing with Bertram under circumstances of secrecy; their relations, if Bertram has his way, are to be by stealth. Certain words rise to her lips as she contemplates the step of deserting her colors and leaving her girlhood forever behind her. As she expresses it, she is in a pass where "we" (meaning women generally) "forsake ourselves." Now *forsake* certainly means to desert or give up what we feel ought to be clung to; and so, reading this "All's Well" passage in the strict light of the context we find one of Shakespeare's women regarding herself, in connection with the giving up of her principles of maidenhood, as a deserter or runaway. It is very apt and luminous of her inner life. In "Romeo and Juliet" we see Shakespeare dealing with a young Italian girl of the same type of womanhood. She and Romeo have been secretly married, and in the evening of that same day we see her waiting, in a transport of anticipation, among the orchard trees. The blood has mounted to her cheeks as she sees her girlhood about to be relinquished; she has a lively sense of the too garish day; and being so modest she wishes night to fall speedily so that her own eyes may wink, or be blinded; for, as she says:

Lovers can see to do their amorous rites,  
And by their own beauties;

Which is to say, without eyes or the help of light. But deeper in her consciousness than this natural reticence, is the feeling that she is deserting that which has been the standard of her whole life — a standard of Madonna-like maidenhood which has been her whole mode of existence and which has been instilled into Italian womanhood especially for generations. It is quite a step to take, in her case as in Diana's. She is a runaway; and may not the meaning be as luminous in one place as the other? The wording is essentially the same and the cases are parallel.

We have now found two passages, each of which throws light on this one line, and which, considered in combination, give this line complete and consistent sense so far as it may be considered separately. Accepting this meaning theoretically we must now put it to the actual and conclusive test. It must fit the whole context. If we have found the meaning, then that meaning, being Shakespeare's, will fall in with and illuminate the whole passage.

Not only this, but every word of the passage, having that unity and continual reference to the central idea which is characteristic of Shakespeare's longer and more elaborate comparisons, will focus its light on this one word and show it as having the very idea we have conjectured.

Upon examination we find that it does so.

Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,  
That runaway's eyes may wink —

It is characteristic of Shakespeare that his characters, in moments of high feeling, draw the whole universe into their own point of view. They see the world, as we all do, in the light of self. This is very strongly brought out in Lear when he addresses the storm as being concerned wholly with his own interests; but it is the same in all of Shakespeare's work. He brings out always that we see the world through our own eyes; the universe takes on the immediate hue of the speaker's thoughts in regard to self. In the above passage we see suddenly that Juliet is regarding the universe in the light of a *bed!* The curtains, which have been gathered together and drawn back in the daytime, after the manner of beds in those days, will now spread out and come close together. What will be the result? Darkness in the bed. The occupant's eyes will then wink, or be in darkness, even when they are open; nothing need be seen;— which exactly suits the desires of the modesty to which this passage refers. If Juliet is seeing night from her own standpoint, then there is no doubt as to whose eyes will be shut or blinded; and in that case there can be no question as to who "runaway" is or in what sense she is a deserter.

The whole passage insists upon being understood in that sense.

Hood my unmanned blood, bating in my cheeks  
With thy black mantle.

In the days when falconry was a pastime, the falcon or hunting hawk, which was very shy and difficult to tame, was carried about with a black hood slipped over its head so that it could not see. This alone ought to be sufficient to settle the question as to whose eyes it is that are supposed to wink. Juliet, speaking from her own point of view, makes it plain what her attitude toward the oncoming darkness is. It is not simply that her blushes may not be seen but that she may not *see*. In fact, Shakespeare speaks of the blushes to make all the more vivid the image of the hood going down over her own head. And once it is proved who it was that was to wink, it is inevitable, by the sentence itself, who runaway is supposed to be. That point I believe we have now taken up and proved in all possible ways: we have seen like usage and a like point of view in two other cases in the plays; we have seen that our interpretation is in keeping with Shakespeare's conception of his ideal women; we have found also that it is harmonious with Shakespeare's way of making his characters speak in moments of deep feeling; and we have found that the line so interpreted and read in connection with its own immediate context illuminates the whole passage, the words of which in turn converge all their light upon it as upon a central idea. As all hope of solving any of the remaining Shakes-

pearean cruxes has been practically, and I might say confidently, given up in the last ten or twenty years, this passage has been marked "*hopelessly corrupt*," as in Neilson's recent edition, on the theory that a passage which no one could ever solve could not possibly be as Shakespeare wrote it. The Globe accordingly places the obolus against it. And Professor Johnson, whose recent book I have mentioned in the beginning, voices the generally accepted opinion that what has not been solved by this time will never be solved. This state of affairs is rather embarrassing to one who would fain come forth and invite the world to re-study Shakespeare with him. It is difficult enough to state the cruxes, with which the human mind seems to have gone completely astray, in a way that will make them simple, without having to struggle against the preconception that one is simply working in ambitious ignorance. It creates a state of mind which is unsympathetic and therefore hard to help. But yet what beauty is hidden away in them! When you consider the feelings of Juliet in the light not merely of her modesty but of her whole previous state of being as a woman whose one ideal was chastity, such a step as marriage was like deserting the very world of maidenhood. What a stroke of truth then to simply have her say the word *runaway*! So much in so little.

Dowden's explanation is: "The central motive of the speech is 'Come night, come Romeo.' Having invoked night to spread the curtain, Juliet says, with a thought of her own joyful wakefulness, 'Yonder sun may sleep' (*wink* having commonly this sense); and then she calls on Romeo to leap to her arms." He agreed with Warburton that "runaway's" means Phoebus or the sun. With the rest of them however he found difficulty in proving that it was well to call the sun a runaway when Juliet was complaining of its being slow. He tried however — with results remarkably hard to understand.

The result of trying a different sentence division, as instanced in Neilson's edition (1906) is that it has left on hand the following statement as a separate sentence.

Untalked of and unseen  
Lovers can see to do their amorous rites,  
And by their own beauties; etc.

Can anyone imagine Shakespeare tendering the piece of valuable information conveyed in these first two lines!

The sentence division of the First Folio is correct. It is from this standpoint that I have explained the passage. The Globe text is quite acceptable in this regard; but the "runaways'" of this edition should be changed to "runaway's."

## AIRY AIR

(TROILUS AND CRESSIDA, III, 3, 225)

And like a dewdrop from a lion's mane  
Be shook to airy air.

(First Folio)

And like a dewdrop from a lion's mane  
Be shook to air.

(Modern editions)

THIS alteration of the First Folio text is wrong for a multitude of reasons.

*First.* A play is intended to be acted. Certain lines are therefore especially fitted for gesture. In this scene Achilles is sulking in his tent, and Patroclus, thinking his strange inactivity could only be due to love-sickness, comes in to remonstrate with him. With vivid and compelling imagery he compares Achilles to the lion that shakes this trifle from him. The argument would naturally be enforced by gesture, for actors have got to act; and for this purpose we have the quick abruptive *shook* followed by the flowing *airy air*. The gesture begins on “*shook*” by jerking the fist forcefully out from the left shoulder, and then the limp hand, rotating lightly on the wrist, describes two curves to depict the flowing air. We see the dewdrop thrown forth to evaporate — so light a trifle is love. The words *airy air* are what the careless hand follows as it swings

idly on the wrist. As there is a contrast in pictorial idea between the strong lion and the inert pendent dewdrop, so there is contrast between the forceful half of the gesture and the part that deals with air; and the words fit it. With the mere words "to air" this cannot be done. As a well-known dramatic critic said, to whom I demonstrated the dramatic idea of the line, "It would cut the gesture off at the elbow."

*Second.* As there is a contrast in pictorial idea between the masterful lion and the air-wandering drop of dew, and as this is enforced by contrast in gesture, so the words must also present a contrast from the standpoint of the ear alone. And each half of this contrast must be a true sound-picture. This is here accomplished by means of two flowing *r's* with mere vowels between; and right there a zephyr touches the imagination; we see it flow and turn and veer. This is the very art which "gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name." And this is raised in value by juxtaposition with *shook*. Try to say *shook* in a soft and flowing way or to gesture it as such a word. You cannot do it, for its sounds are essentially abrupt and forceful. For this purpose of poetic drama, "Be shook to air" will not do. The air does not flow. It falls flat.

*Third.* Editors from the first have preferred the abbreviated line because they have thought the other was not logical. The theory is that

to describe a noun by an adjective made out of itself does not add anything to it. The theory would be good if it were true. But air is not always airy. Mere atmospheric air is not airy air. On that dewy morning when the lion rose and shook himself, it was a time when the air was in motion; the zephyrs of morning were abroad. The adjective "airy" has become incorporated in the language as expressing light and changeful qualities. Why then should not a poet who wishes to make live air be allowed to robe it in its qualities? Nothing else will do to describe it, for air is unique. Without this adjective it is not a moving morning.

*Fourth.* In editing Shakespeare we should be guided by his own practice more than by our logical theory. In "Lucrece" Shakespeare unquestionably uses the expression "dear dear," the first word being an adjective and the second a noun (line 1602). Any theory as to what Shakespeare would do must be discountenanced by what he did do; and this would warrant us in letting "airy air" alone. Moreover, when Shakespeare wished to convey the idea of *mere* air, simple scientific atmosphere, motionless and still, he was careful to use words that would say it; therefore we have in "Macbeth," "the casing air." That is to say, the globe-encircling or surrounding air. The idea conveyed to the mind is motionless; the attention is concentrated on atmosphere itself. And so, as Shakespeare was so particular, it is reason-

able to suppose that if he wished to depict the lightsome breezes he would say the "airy air."

Then too, as to the art of contrast in the line,—ideal, phonetic and dramatic,—we find that he has a particular penchant for the abrupt poetic uses of *shook*, and this especially in contrast with flowing *r*'s and the open vowel sounds. In *Antony and Cleopatra* he describes an earthquake in two lines. You can feel the very shock and jolt of it.

. . . . the round world  
Should have shook. . . .

Open the ear to the complete fullness of the *round world* (note the two *r*'s working with vowels) and then the sudden oscillating effect of *should-have-shook*. There is no ro-o-o-u-u-und wor-r-r-l'd about that; the actor would give his fist a motion calculated to jar creation. Shakespeare is doing the same thing here that he is in the passage from "*Troilus and Cressida*"—or would be if we printed what he wrote.

I might remark in passing that the lines from *Antony and Cleopatra* are marked with the obolus signifying that there is editorial doubt as to whether their present form is a typographical error or not (Globe edition). The reason it is suspected of loss or error is that the words do not smoothly fill out the regular pentameter measure that Shakespeare was supposed to write in; and the obolus is placed before "round

world." Clark and Wright, our modern standard authorities, evidently did not know that the particular vocalization of the words, to give the intended effect, would have to be something different from mere pentameter measure.

When an editor has no ear for dramatic poetry he naturally fails in all such places. Then we have the text altered according to his idea, or else it is queried as being the mistake of an early type-setter.

*Fifth.* Shakespearean scholarship accounts for the superfluous "airy" by a very good typographical theory. One of the common errors of a type-setter is that of setting a word twice. He has his attention called away from his work and when he resumes he sets the word he last had in mind instead of continuing where he left off.

But, let us ask — If a compositor set the word *air*, and then left off and resumed on the same word, what would the result be? It would be "air air," not "airy air." So also with the compositor of three hundred years ago. He set up "ayrie ayre" as we now find it in the First Folio. Here the adjective and the noun differences are observed, which would hardly be the case if it were such an error. It shows care and attention. The theory by which the word is discarded is the very one by which it should be kept.

I have dealt with this line somewhat formally

and at length because it has so utterly disappeared from the text, in the relations which "airy" gives it, that the whole weight of editorial authority is against me; and I am desirous of having it restored permanently.

The only real "authority" in such a case is that of internal evidence. If we change "airy air," we have not only lost the soft suggestion of that mild and dewy morning when the lion rose and shook himself, but we have given the actor's arm no medium to move in and no course to follow. The words "airy air" are susceptible of the most expressive flourish of a bandmaster's wand — so also of the motioning hand. But the ending "to air" is all too scant.

## SOUL AND DUTY

*King.* Thou still hast been the father of good news.

*Polonius.* Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,  
I hold my duty as I hold my soul,  
Both to my God, and to my gracious king.

(*Hamlet, ii, 2, 45, Modern editions*)

I hold my dutie, as I hold my Soule,  
Both to my God, one to my gracious king.

(*Folios*)

THE *one* of this last line, because it has proved impossible to construe it into any evident sense, has long been considered an error. Modern editions have substituted *and* for the original *one* of the Folios. Furness, acceding to the general opinion that *one* was an error of the early printers, makes the following comment in his *Variorum*:

“Dyce (*Strictures, etc., 187*) truly says that the attempts to explain the error, *one*, of the Ff have proved unsuccessful.”

If we will only have regard for what Polonius naturally would say, both in respect of his character and the common sense of the case, it is not difficult to see that Shakespeare wrote the word *one* in this place. Polonius, with his usual way of making fine distinctions, comes before the king and says:— “I hold my duty as I hold my soul; both to my God, one to my gracious king.” In other words, Polonius holds or owes both his soul and his duty to his

God, whereas he holds but one of them, his duty, to his king. For it would be manifestly absurd to tell a king that you owe your soul to him in the same sense that you owe it to the Creator. The king would not be very strongly convinced of your sincerity. The flattery would be too rank. Therefore Polonius' *one*, which makes this exception, would seem to be dictated by mere common sense.

Polonius, who is not entirely a fool and is not intended as such, has assiduously built up for himself a character of wisdom, of weighty mentality and acute and subtle insight, and he has attained to a court office in that capacity. He is a diplomat, the king's professional adviser. As a matter of fact, however, the every-day run of affairs at court does not make very frequent call for his profound services; there is not enough occasion to keep his reputation with the king always to the fore. Therefore he is always watching for the smallest opportunity to make an impression. His whole standing in life depends upon his keeping up the idea that his great insight makes him indispensable, and in lack of anything else to work upon, he seizes upon the merest trifles and handles them after the manner of the weightiest affairs. This habit has so grown upon him that in his old age it makes him a somewhat ridiculous figure — Shakespeare uses him in that capacity. Usually, as in the present case, his duties make of him little more

than a sort of sublimated office boy carrying a message, and when he expands such service into the most sapient achievement and works in at the same time the highest declarations of loyalty, it makes him laughable and frequently such a bore that the queen has to remind him to tell, in direct plain language, what it is that he wishes to say. He is a travesty on the diplomatic cast of mind with its profundity, insincerity and wire-drawn distinctions. Polonius' anxiety to make an impression is a point of character which Shakespeare is always keeping before us. With regard to this line, therefore, that rendition must be correct which carries this point in the depiction of character. If we change it so that it loses its exceedingly logical, closely reasoned point and its involute construction, we have lost what Shakespeare wrote. Besides which there is the apposition between *one* and *both*, a method that is characteristic of Shakespeare's work throughout. The amended text loses all this. In short it is *one* which makes good sense while *and* does not. Substitute the latter and look at the statement closely. Besides being too tame and flat for Polonius, the whole statement becomes loose and uncertain.

But there is a more important point. The passage as a whole is a study in the art of flattery. Shakespeare has kept in mind certain subtle truths regarding human nature, and by choosing Polonius to put them in practice

he has kept the wily and doddering old diplomat delightfully in character. There are certain fundamental facts in human nature which I would advise anyone to study who wishes to become an adept in the art of flattery.

*First.* If you wish to flatter anyone in reality, you must seem to be telling the truth; and no form of truth-telling is so convincing as that of making reservations. Nothing gives the appearance of honest truth-telling so much as the taking of a statement that, upon second thought, you find too *large* for exact verity and then trimming it down conscientiously to the size of the truth itself. For there truth-telling is a complicate matter which goes on in the open; the conscientiousness is evident. And if the reservations would seem, from the teller's private point of view, to *detract*, candidly, from the importance of the other person, the statement becomes all the more effective as flattery, for he must indeed be an honest soul who would go so far as *openly* to take away anything from his meed of praise. It is important however that this seeming detraction should not, as a matter of fact, be any detraction at all. Polonius, by his way of putting it, very conscientiously denies the king a certain power of possession over him. He does *not* owe his *soul* to him. That he owes to his God. It would seem, to the person addressed, that anything so conscientious, even at the risk of coming close to detraction, could not be in-

spired by any mere motives of flattery. Polonius has thought aloud, as it were, and his honest mind has produced this reservation. And yet the reservation is, in fact, no detraction at all, for what King could possibly object to a man's owing his soul to his God?

*Second.* The mood of abstract, or impersonal, thought, is the best soil out of which flattery can spring. For abstract impersonal thought is wholly engaged upon a question — something entirely aside from the mere person of the party under consideration. Flattery would therefore seem to be far from the particular state of mind. A fine distinction serves the purpose, for it is the very nature of conscientious thought to observe distinctions and differences. It is by making mental corrections and verbal qualifications that truth is arrived at. And so, when we have a character like Polonius, we may expect to see flattery swim in her own native element. What he has to say is really very simple — He owes his duty to his king as he owes his soul to God. He starts out in a way that would seem quite spontaneous and natural — I owe my duty as I owe my soul; and right there he sees the force of having a mental qualm and making, for the king's edification, a most conscientious distinction. His abstract and well-pondered reverie has been given, also, a very religious turn — not a small point in impressing the king with his incorruptible veracity.

When Ophelia, even in her insanity, says "You must wear your rue with a difference," she is a true daughter of the Polonius family — always observing differences and making fine distinctions.

Hudson, in adopting the reading *and*, explains his understanding of it by a paraphrase — "I hold my duty both to my God and to my king as I do my soul." After reading this explanation one would be justified in inquiring, Holds his soul to *whom*? It is difficult to make consistent sense out of *and*; and the more one contemplates it as the substance of a Shakespearean remark the more hopeless it appears. The First Folio, besides offering the proper sense, is even correctly punctuated to enforce it.

In 1st Henry VI, iii, 4, 12, we have: First to my God and next unto your Grace — an interesting parallel.

## THE PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT

SCENE I. *An apartment in the Duke's palace.*

Enter *Duke, Escalus, Lords and Attendants*

*Duke.* Escalus.

*Escal.* My lord.

*Duke.* Of government the properties to unfold,  
Would seem in me to affect speech and discourse;  
Since I am put to know that your own science  
Exceeds, in that, the lists of all advice  
My strength can give you: then no more remains,  
But that to your sufficiency . . . . .  
. . . . . as your worth is able,  
And let them work. The nature of our people,  
Our city's institutions, and the terms  
For common justice, you're as pregnant in  
As art and practice hath enriched any  
That we remember. There is our commission,  
From which we would not have you warp.

(*Measure for Measure*, i, 1, 8, *Modern editions*)

Then no more remains  
But that, to your sufficiency, as your worth is able  
And let them work.

(*First Folio*, 1623)

THE vacancy indicated by the row of dots does not occur in the original editions of Shakespeare. The passage is thus printed by modern editors upon the theory that part of the text is missing. Many attempts have been made to fill out the supposed *lacuna* by conjecture, but as none have proved successful, the most approved practice is to indicate a loss in the text.

As this hitch in the lines occurs at the very opening of the play, it has been the cause of much perplexity. Henry Irving said: "This clause in the Duke's first sentence has proved a more awkward stumbling block to commentators than almost any passage in Shakespeare." It is one of the four passages in all the plays which Neilson particularly notes as "hopelessly corrupt." The Globe editors have marked it with the obolus according to their explanation in the preface: "Whenever a lacuna occurs too great to be filled out with any approach to certainty by conjecture, we have marked the passage with an obolus (†)".

What we need here is some thought upon the play as a whole. "*Measure for Measure*" is a play which deals with the nature of government. Being a product of Shakespeare's riper years, it has behind it much deep and thoroughgoing thought upon the problems which confront society as a whole. In the outcome Shakespeare emphasizes the fact that though a government may have any number of laws, true justice and the public welfare are, after all, dependent upon the character and insight of those who hold the reins of authority.

In a good public officer three things are necessary — power, intellect and character. A man may have great intellectual ability but it will avail him little in a public position if he have not the authority or power to put his ideas into practice. On the other hand, a man may

be in a position of absolute authority and have any amount of brains, and yet his influence for good will still be dependent upon his moral character — his personal nature or “worth” as Shakespeare calls it; for it is this quality which is needed to temper his administration with high beneficent aims and a deep sympathetic insight of human weaknesses and needs. This inner personal government, which is as strict with itself as it is with others, and which looks its own shortcomings in the face, is necessary to guide the intellect and make the authority of good effect.

As I wish to offer this to the reader as a recognized truth, and not a mere interpretation of Shakespeare upon my part, let us take our information upon government from a great political economist of today. Nearest at hand, as I write, I find *Outlines of Economics* (1893) by Richard T. Ely of the University of Wisconsin. On page 293 he lays down broadly “The Nature and State of Public Activity.” After remarking that something more is needed than mere selfish interest to make a successful government, he lays down the following axiom (the italics being his own):

“We must add the social nature, teaching men to act in *concert*; the intellectual nature, teaching them to act *consciously*; the moral nature, teaching them to act *rightly*.”

When we remember that people act in concert in order to have power, it will be seen that

this all corresponds to the three requirements which I have mentioned. In a democracy, the people must have these qualities in order to choose officers rightly; in a monarchy, such as Shakespeare is considering, these must be the qualities of the ruler himself if government is to prosper — power, intellect and character.

Now if Shakespeare is writing a drama which deals with the problems of government, and if he has given deep and able consideration to his theme, we may expect him to keep strictly in view this fundamental truth. Let us see whether he does.

The first scene opens with the venerable Escalus stepping upon the stage and the Duke coming in to confer with him. As the Duke steps into view we see that he bears in his hand two rolls of parchment — “commissions” (see lines 14 and 48). These important-looking documents are intended to catch the eye and arouse our curiosity at once: They represent the power which the Duke is going to confer upon Escalus and Angelo, each in his respective station; and the conferring of this power is the particular business of the opening scene. The Duke in a few words makes it clear that Escalus is a man of great experience and ability, his “science” of government being so great that the Duke considers advice unnecessary. Escalus’ mental equipment, as thus described, is shown to be sufficient. But how about the other qualifications? The Duke is

about to confer the power. He selects one of the commissions by which authority is to be conferred and bringing it more prominently into view he says to Escalus:

"Put that (the power), to your sufficiency (your experience and mental ability) as your worth (your character or moral nature) is able,  
And let them work."

Shakespeare here speaks plainly of the three things which always have determined, and always must determine, the true success of a public officer. And this trinity of qualifications we now have split up and separated by a row of dots upon the supposition that part of the text is missing and that something *comes between!* This could only be because editors and commentators have failed to see, in these opening lines, Shakespeare's prompt announcement of the theme of the play as a whole. Nothing has been lost out of this line. Nothing could be added without spoiling it. It is the exact truth of government. To split it up with rows of dots puts an understanding reader entirely astray.

It will be observed that I have emended the first word by changing the *B* to *P*. It is very easy for a typesetter, in distributing type, to throw a *b* into the *p* box; and such a mischance would result in an error like this. In any modern edition, the original text, which was very faulty in type-setting, has been corrected in more than ten thousand places. I

think that when we view this line in the light of what it is saying, the present emendation will be found as authoritative as any of them.

In fact this very mischance (the throwing of a *p* into the *b* box) has been known to change the text of Shakespeare in comparatively recent times. For generations, up to the time of Knight, a certain line in "Troilus and Cressida" was printed, "thou art here put to thrash Trojans" (ii, 2, 50). This however was incorrect, for the First Folio had it, "thou art here but to thrash Trojans." For years, through edition after edition, the alteration in the text was not noticed. This is a thing which frequently happens in typesetting; and it probably accounts for the "But" in the place where, as I believe, Shakespeare wrote *Put*.

This emendation, which I merely suggest, may be adopted and it may not; it is not the important point. The point is that we should understand what is being said here and grasp it in its larger aspect as related to the play as a whole. If we do this we cannot allow this line to be disrupted by a row of dots upon the supposition that it is the meaningless remainder of a lost passage.

There can be no doubt as to the sense in which each word is intended to be taken. The meaning which we are to gather from Escalus' "sufficiency" is carefully tended to in the two preceding lines. It consists of Escalus' profound "science" of government, his mental

equipment; and the word “sufficiency” refers back to that meaning. Power is being conferred upon him by the commission or parchment; and his “worth,” by being mentioned as distinct from his intellectual equipment and his authority, can only mean his moral nature or character. The significance of the words, besides carrying their meanings in themselves, is made very exact by their apposition; and it will be noted that the greatest weight is put upon the moral qualification by the word chosen to express it — “worth.” “Sufficiency” is merely that which suffices; it is enough in its kind. This is the word chosen to express Escalus’ great intellectual attainments. Now this serves to throw our principal attention upon what is called his *worth* — a much larger thing.

The passage as a whole makes temporal power and intellectual power wholly dependent upon a man’s moral nature, or intrinsic worth, for good results. Now this is just what the play shows us in the end. Angelo failed, with Escalus as chief adviser, not because he was not a good reasoner, or inexperienced, or because he lacked power, but because his moral nature was at fault.

As to the acting of this opening scene. In the opening scene of a play, where the action may not rise to any great height because there cannot be the accumulated interest to build up a tense situation, a dramatist has to use great

art to arouse interest at once. There is need of clever “stage business” to catch the attention and start something of interest at once. Shakespeare makes subtle use of these official-looking parchments — documents no doubt be-sealed and beribboned to make them seem important. They enchain the attention at once. We find that he soon reveals the nature of one of them, not in mere statement but dramatically:

Put *that* to your *sufficiency*, as your *worth* is able,  
And let them work.

He does not hand it over and designate it as a “commission” till four lines later, meantime he holds it before him and indicates it thus as being important. The Duke still has one left, and Angelo is now called in.

Theobald (1733) emended the passage —

then no more remains  
But that to your sufficiency (you add  
Due diligence) as your worth is able  
And let them work.

As if such details as “due diligence” were not included in the larger meaning of the line! Such emendation is not warranted; but Theobald’s fame is still of such power that this emendation is still used in widely-read editions.

## THE KING AND THE BODY

*Hamlet.* The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing —

(Hamlet, iv, 2, 29)

I CAN best convey the meaning of these words by a series of mental steps. The sentence is very delusive; it was intended to be so by Shakespeare. As Rosencrantz was supposed to see nothing but pure nonsense in such a statement, being too shallow to understand Hamlet, it was necessary for Shakespeare to put the sentence in such a form that it would appear the same to us, at first blush; thus we should see how perfectly insane it seemed to the two king's-messengers. At the same time its meaning is perfectly open, and was intended to be open by Shakespeare, to those who had the feeling and insight to understand Hamlet. Let the reader exercise a little patience, therefore, if at first he does not catch it. Afterwards I shall explain what relation it bears to the play as a whole.

The idea that Hamlet is here expressing is as follows:

To a dead man, a king does not exist. The king has no being, is nothing, to a dead man, because the dead man is not conscious of him. But to a live king, a dead man *does* exist.

Which is to say:

To a dead man, a king *is not*. But to a live king a dead man *is*.

Or, in other words:

With the king, a body *is*. But with the body a king *is not*.

Or, to use Hamlet's exact words:

The body *is*, with the king. But the king *is not*, with the body.

It is all a matter of being, this question of *is*. And consciousness is what *being* consists of, or life.

The reader will at once be reminded of the soliloquy:—“To be or not to be.” It is all of a piece with this, even as the play in its deeper aspects, is all of a piece. Let us turn now to the soliloquy.

The whole soliloquy, “To be or not to be,” is engaged solely with the subject of *forgetting*. That is to say, not with mere death, as ordinarily understood, but with oblivion. Hamlet's one great desire was to forget. The only way to forget is to die. Hence his contemplation of suicide.

There is but one thing that stays his hand from self-destruction. It is the question as to whether, after death, there may still be consciousness. And therefore memory of things in this life. For if he must remember in the future life, his heart must still ache; and in that case there is no escape in that direction, no inducement in dying. It was not merely his

life that Hamlet would wish to destroy, but his *being*.

To die; to sleep; —

To sleep? Perchance to dream! Ay, there's the rub.

There indeed *was* the rub to a man with his reasons for dying. His impelling reason for wanting to die is stated at once, first and foremost. It is "*the heartache* and the thousand and one natural shocks that flesh is heir to." By "natural shocks" he means the shocks to his very nature — his heart and affections and ideals. He had had a terrible insight of the possibilities of human nature. Life had touched him to the quick on all four sides — through father, mother, sweetheart and friends. He had a father whose own brother had murdered him, a mother guilty of incest, a sweetheart who proved shallow and conventional in her love, boyhood friends equally vain and shallow who would spy upon him through selfish motives. All this came upon him suddenly; and being a man of high mental power it gave him a terrible insight of the world as it is. So long as he could remember these things and these people, his heart must ache. The only remedy is oblivion.

In mere "action" there is no remedy for such things. They are simple facts; and of such facts his life must consist, no matter what he does or how successful he might be. It is often wondered why he did not kill the king, console himself with "revenge" and then aspire

to his father's throne. And then what, let us ask. To be a king and live a life of such memories! Such insights!

When there is no remedy for a state of affairs, what can a man ask but to forget it all?

We cannot too tacitly fix upon our minds that in this part of the soliloquy Hamlet is wholly concerned, not with any dread of dying, but with the question as to whether *memory* persists after *death*. This is important to our understanding of the play inasmuch as it affects his course of action and shows his trend of thought.

It is next important for us to gather the exact meaning of those lines:—

Whether 't is nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them.

There is here no thought or intention of setting to work to straighten out mere affairs at court. A man cannot take a dagger to the shallowness of mother, sweetheart and friend; he cannot kill the crime of his father's brother by simply killing the man. The memory and the facts are left; and life to him must consist of that painful insight and knowledge of the world. Shakespeare here speaks of ending troubles immediately and at once by merely taking arms against them. This means simply

the taking of arms against *self* — suicide; for not by any such opposition to others could his troubles be conquered. But by death, if it brings oblivion, the dagger can conquer all. It might be easy enough to kill a king. But the only way to really wipe a man out of existence is to kill yourself.

In this soliloquy, there is not the least hesitation over the fact that self-destruction may be against the law of heaven. It was in the earlier soliloquy that he gave thought to such matters — *before* the whole state of affairs had been revealed to him. Here there is nothing of that. He is wholly concerned with the hope that death may end all. Shakespeare has eliminated everything to bring forth in all its depths this one desire. And so the prime concern of this soliloquy is that of *forgetting*.

With this too short view of the soliloquy, we are in a position to return with a new eye to the “crux” with which we began. The accepted view with all modern authorities is that these words are “intended as nonsense”; or, as the Globe editors say, “Hamlet is talking nonsense designedly.” But let us look at the facts.

Hamlet inadvertently, and not caring much what he did, had killed Polonius and hid the body under the stairs. In this juncture the messenger comes to him from the king and says, “You must tell us where the body *is*, and go with us to the king.” Immediately there arose in

Hamlet's mind, in logical connection, the image of a king and a dead body, and with it the one idea that concerned him personally. In his life he had two courses open to him. One was to occupy his time with overcoming the usurper and trying to place himself on his father's throne; the other was to turn the dagger against himself and get relief from that heartache which, in any case, would be his for life. Situated as he was, he might become either a king or a dead body. They were the only two logical courses open to him. In the present juncture of his life there was suddenly and vividly presented to his contemplation a dead body on the one hand and a king on the other; and the messenger had said "You must tell us where the body *is*." This matter of "*is*," in connection with a dead body, raises up to contemplation the whole mystery of *being*. It is the old question of, "to be or not to be," and Hamlet's mind, with the concrete presentment before him, returns at once to the question that most deeply concerns him. His remark upon the subject is quite natural. To the king, the body *is*. But with the body the king *is not*. And back of his remark was the thought that if he were a dead body, nobody would be now saying to him, "Go with us to the king." The hypocritical and hollow king, the corrupt court and the whole painful state of affairs would be wiped out of existence so far as he is concerned — a thing much to be desired. It seemed so,

for the moment; and he said what he thought. But the mystery of death still remained; and he had probably decided that "it is nobler in the mind" to suffer and try to do something than to desert the field of action.

## THE SUM

Enter a Messenger

*Mess.* News, my good lord, from Rome.

*Antony.* Grates me: the sum.

*Cleo.* Nay, hear them, Antony.

(*Antony and Cleopatra*, i, 1, 18)

THE generally accepted interpretation of Antony's "the sum" is that he is ordering the messenger to sum up the news shortly. Impatient of interruption he exclaims that it "grates" upon him and then demands the news from Rome in a nutshell.

This is a misconception. Antony's words, "the sum," are in answer to Cleopatra's foregoing inquiry as to "*how much*" he loves her. She has been insisting upon an answer to that question, but just when Antony is beginning to expatiate upon that pleasant theme, the messenger arrives and interrupts him. Vexed at this untimely obtrusion he waves the messenger aside and at once resumes his reply to Cleopatra. "The sum —", he begins; but before he can tell her the amount of his love he is again interrupted, this time by her. The line should be printed with a dash after it to indicate that he has begun a sentence which is broken off.

At first blush it might seem that the usual interpretation of the passage is as good as the

one I am submitting. We must, however, look at the context. If Antony, the triple pillar of the world, commanded a man to sum up his message quickly, it is safe to say that he would make some attempt to do so. But the messenger does not respond. Then, too, if Antony is here supposed to be asking for the sum of the news he must have some intention of listening. But Cleopatra immediately says, "Nay, hear them, Antony." He not only shows no indication of having made such an inquiry of the messenger, but he continues to ignore his presence even when Cleopatra tries later to get him to give audience. Thus the accepted understanding of the line produces such a state of affairs that in order to assent to it we have to have no regard for human nature. This is un-Shakespearean.

On the other hand, if Antony is replying to the question "how much," it is quite natural for him to begin, "The sum ——". As soon as he began, Cleopatra saw that he was addressing her and not the messenger; it is for that reason that she breaks in, "Nay, hear them, Antony." And the messenger says nothing because he saw that he simply was not wanted.

Difficulty with this passage, which began with the earliest editors, has resulted in continual efforts to repunctuate it; but always with the one preconceived meaning in view. In addition to the suggestions I have made I would separate the two halves of the statement, as at

present printed, with a period, thus showing their complete detachment from one another, and indicate them as being addressed to the Messenger and Cleopatra respectively.

The opening scene of this play is all bent to the purpose of impressing upon us Antony's complete infatuation and obsession with the charming Egyptian. Therefore, at the very beginning, we see him ignoring state affairs entirely — not partially or with a divided mind. This is brought out most strongly in the line we are considering; it was Shakespeare's strongest point in calculating the opening. We should not, therefore, be willing to consider Antony as consenting to pause in his courtship and lend one ear to the news, as it were, providing it was summed up or made short.

## ROPES IN SUCH A SCAR

*Diana.* I see that men make ropes in such a scar.  
That we'll forsake ourselves. Give me that ring.  
(All's Well, iv, 2, 38, *Globe ed.*)

THIS is one of the four passages in all the plays which Neilson especially signalizes as "*hopelessly corrupt.*"

An appalling list of proposed emendations, beginning with Rowe in 1709, shows the efforts of successive editors and critics to wring a consistent meaning out of the passage. At present the attempts seem to be exhausted, and hope of solving the meaning has been finally given up. The Globe editors mark the passage with the obolus to signify its hopelessness.

I have already explained, in my elucidation of "*runaway's eyes,*" that a girl who is about to give up that condition of maidenhood which has been her very state of existence might naturally feel that she was a deserter. Diana's way of expressing it is that she is about to forsake herself. For as she is a maid, and this maidenhood is her very self, to voluntarily cease to be one is to forsake the Diana that she is. The Italian Diana's deeper feelings as she decides to do so may be seen through the eyes of any woman. Woman is her own keeper; it is herself that she has been trusted with.

Chastity, her first duty and ideal, is nothing less than a Cause to which she is sworn; she must not desert it despite the world. Therefore, that which a maiden is, and which she has always persisted in being, is her *self* in the truest sense of the word, for it is the very stuff of her conscious existence. It is what she is in the world. And so Diana, as she put forth her hand to accept the ring from such a man as Bertram (who was already married to another) felt that she was truly forsaking herself. She would no more be the girl she was.

It is probably unnecessary to dwell further upon this point of view—Shakespeare's expression of it is sufficient. The circumstances being understood and the meaning of this word fixed, it now devolves upon us to explain, if possible, the figure of speech by which Shakespeare wished to make it all more forceful and vivid. And as to what a "scar" is, or scaur (formerly spelled *scarre*) there ought to be no great doubt about that, especially in the light of the context.

"Scar—A bare and broken place on the side of a mountain, or in the high bank of a river; a precipitous bank of earth."  
—*Webster's Dictionary* (1890).

We are all supposed to understand Tennyson easily enough when he writes:

O, sweet and far, from cliff and scar,  
The horns of elfland faintly blowing.

In Shakespeare's day we find it spelled "scarre," and so his conception of the word

was no doubt related to the French *escharre*; and this means “a dry slough” or ravinelike place worn out by the action of water. It only remains, then, for us to take this simply worded passage and lend our imagination to what Shakespeare is saying. A figure of speech, we sometimes need to remind ourselves, has two sides to it. It is a little allegory, a fable in a word or two; it is an idea, a feeling, illustrated by a mental picture. And in Shakespeare’s mind these pictures were always vividly conceived and exactly fitted to the parallel case.

Let us, then, imagine the coast of England. It is a shore faced by steep cliffs like those at Dover; and at the foot of these walls of England is the long smooth strip of strand — “the unnumbered sands” of the shore. A distance from shore, anchored in the offing, is a ship; and walking along the shore is a sailor, now left to an hour of liberty, who belongs to the ship. On the face of the cliff, here and there, are ropes by which samphire gatherers go up and down. Egg-gatherers sometimes come here, too, and fishermen and beach-combers; and the way from the long stretch of beach where “the unnumbered, idle pebble lies,” up to the general level of the country is often by means of ropes. They hang down in plain sight on the bald face of the cliff. As the sailor wanders along he comes to where there is a scar or gully. In this dry gully, secluded

in its depths and quite shut off from view, he comes across temptation itself. A rope shows him the way to desert his ship. Here is a secret place where he will be unseen; and some man has prepared the rope for him. In the preparedness of the thing he is tempted, forgets his articles to the ship and his duties of sailorhood, and deserts.

The only difference between such a one and Diana is that she is forsaking her maidenhood, her self — the thing that *she* is vowed to as a sailor to his ship. The importunate Bertram has been laboring by argument to overcome the difficulties of her own mind; he has been trying to assist her out of the barriers of her character. The arguments he weaves are the “ropes.” Her relations with Bertram are secret; she is to deal with him by stealth. Secretly, away from the eyes of the world, she is to desert, or as she says, to “forsake” her maidenhood. In this pictorial passage the “scar” implies secrecy — a scar being a secluded place.

Commentators have spent their utmost learning and ingenuity arguing what a *scar* might be and what it is that Diana is supposed to forsake. When we see the word *scar* in connection with a *rope* it would seem that there could be little doubt as what sort of a scar it was; and still less as to what the rope was there for.

While we should conceive Shakespeare's

figures of speech as pictorially as our imagination will allow, I do not mean to insist that the reader shall confine himself to the exact details I have used to bring forth the meaning. Shakespeare does not need to go into details; he touches off the imagination with the few vital words which will enforce the idea in its principal aspects. We should at least catch the spirit of the comparison and remember that woman is bound and circumscribed by the strongest barriers of custom and education and the very instincts of her finer nature to regard her womanhood as a trust, a thing to which she is bound as a nun to her convent or a sailor to his ship. I have said that the *scar*, being secluded, implies secrecy. It also depicts a barrier, a place to be gotten out of; and Bertram, by his fine-spun arguments and logical ropes, is showing her the way out. When she says, therefore,

I see that men make ropes in such a *scar*  
That we'll forsake ourselves

she means that men contrive such opportune and secret places, and offer such specious arguments and easy ways to sin, that women are tempted to overcome the barriers of their nature and forsake their womanhood. The figure of speech is useful because it says so much in little. It has never been explained in this way before.

Commentators generally have been taken up with the problem as to what it is that is being forsaken; and many of them seem to think that it is the rope or the gully which women *themselves* forsake; though what these things stand for is not explained. Others think it ought to read "in such a scare" and ascribe the present reading to a mistake upon the part of the printers of the Folio. As the Folio, which is full of error in punctuation, prints the word ropes as follows—"rope's"—many critics think that this stands for "rope us." The present-day state of affairs is shown in the note of Gollancz summing up the most plausible theories:

"This is one of the standing cruxes in the text of Shakespeare; some thirty emendations have been proposed for 'ropes' and 'scarre'. . . The apostrophe in the First and Second Folios makes it almost certain that 's stands for *us*. Possibly '*make*' is used as an auxiliary; '*make rope's*' would then mean 'do constrain, or ensnare us.' Or is '*make rope*' a compound verb? '*Scarre*' may mean '*scare*' (*i.e.* 'fright'). The general sense seems to be 'I see that man may reduce us to such a fright that we'll forsake ourselves.'"

Inasmuch as Bertram was the opposite of threatening, and used only the softest blandishment and persuasion, Gollancz's conclusion after considering all the attempts does not seem very fit to the actual case. It is difficult to see

what Shakespeare would mean by writing "men make-rope us in such a scarre."

There has been much clinging to the apostrophe in the word *rope's* because it is thus found in the First and Second Folios; but this is due to the fact that no possible solution presented itself and this seemed to offer a different way out, whatever it might signify. However we must remember that the Second Folio had no independent source; it was copied from the First Folio; and the First Folio has thousands of errors in punctuation which have been corrected without question. The fact that a mistake has been copied does not lend it any authority, though many editors have seemed to reason that it does. The editor of the Second Folio was human; and, as he probably did not understand the line himself, he simply put down what he found in the First Folio.

Following is a list of emendations, beginning with Rowe (1709):

ROWE — make hopes in such affairs.

MALONE — make hopes in such a scene.

BECKET — make mopes in such a scar, or make japes of such a scathe.

HENLEY — make hopes in such a scare.

SINGER — make hopes in such a war.

MITFORD — make hopes in such a cause.

COLLIER — make slopes in such a scarre, or make ropes in such a stairs.

DYCE — make hopes in such a case.

STAUNTON — make hopes in such a snare.

COLLIER MSS. — make hopes in such a suit.

WILLIAMS — may cope's in such a sort,

BUBIER — make ropes in such a snare, *or* wake hopes in such a scare.

ADDIS — may drop's in such a scarre.

FLEAY — make rapes in such a scare.

HERR — make oaths in such a siege, *or* make loves in such a service.

LETTSOM — make ropes in such a scape.

BULLOCH — may crop's in such a scar.

DEIGHTON — may rope's in such a snarle.

DANIEL — may rope's in such a snare.

TYLER — make ropes in such a scaine.

KEIGHTLY — make ropes of oaths and vows to scale our fort in hope.

## ARMADO O' THE ONE SIDE

Armado o' the one side,— O a most dainty man!  
To see him walk before a lady and to bear her fan!  
To see him kiss his hand! and how most sweetly a' will swear!  
And his page o' t' other side, that handful of wit!  
Ah, heavens, it is a most pathetical nit!  
Sola, sola!

(*Love's Labour's Lost*, iv, 1, 146)

THIS passage, in its entirety, has been very embarrassing to editors because it seems to have no connection with the scene in which it stands and of which it forms the conclusion. As it appears to be so irrelevant and foreign to the context, some editors, as Staunton, Halliwell and Rolfe, lift it from its present position and find a place for it in the preceding scene at line 136. But others, not finding that it fits here with any convincing aptness, prefer to let it remain where it is according to the original sources of the play. Armado and the Page, whom the clown seems to be characterizing, do not appear in the scene at all; hence there has been difficulty in determining upon what grounds the mind should take such a sudden jump.

The trouble lies in the interpretation — not merely of words and phrases but of the working of the clown's mind. Costard is not talking

about Armado and the Page primarily; he is soliloquizing about the nobleman Boyet who has just left. In order to appreciate Shakespeare's work in this place, it is necessary for us to call to mind the leading traits of certain characters in the play.

The page, Moth, stands for quick-wittedness. He is a cogging and bantering juvenile who is always catching somebody in a verbal trap. To the simple-minded Costard he is the *nonpareil* of wits because he always succeeds in "putting down" others. In that respect he is Costard's delight: "An' I had but one penny in the world thou should'st have it to buy gingerbread." Costard wishes the boy were his "bastard" so that he might be blessed with so bright a son (v, 1, 79).

Armado, on the other hand, was a dandy pure and simple. He is all courtliness and clothes. But as to intellect, his mind is a mere collection of bizarre phrases and knightly notions by which he affects the much-travelled courtier and man of wars. To Costard he would naturally seem the very paragon of ladies' men.

Now what sort of man is Boyet? He is the French nobleman who accompanied the Princess and her ladies to England. The conductor of such a party is, of course, your complete ladies' man; and as we see in this scene particularly, he has a nimble wit in their playful encounters with him.

It is into one of these wit encounters that

the simple-minded swain, Costard, finds himself projected. It is a hunting scene consisting of the Princess and the ladies of her train. Excepting the huntsman who acts as their guide, the only representative of the stronger sex is Boyet. But presently, in the midst of the play of wit, another son of man appears in the person of Costard who has been sent to deliver a letter, and it is not long until this interested spectator is putting in an occasional word of his own. And when Boyet gracefully withdraws from Maria's parting shot and Costard is left standing alone, he is mightily puffed up with the idea that *he* and the ladies have vanquished such a personage as Boyet. It is right in this connection that the stubborn passage comes.

What Costard now does is very natural. Like all of us he wishes to set full value upon the qualities of the enemy, for thus we magnify our own prowess in the encounter. He therefore sets about characterizing Boyet, who, as we have seen, is *both* a fine courtier and a wit; and it immediately appears to Costard that in putting down such a man he has outdone an Armado and a Moth together, all in one person. As his rustic mind has little facility in abstract characterization, he goes about it somewhat after the fashion of those who describe a neighbor as being a Jones o' one side of the family and a Smith o' t'other. Boyet is "Armado o' th' one side" and "his page o' t'other side." Such

is the man he has worsted, a gentleman *and* a scholar; and it is none the less humorous that he considers the specious Armado and the precocious Moth as the *beaux ideals* of the two qualifications, separately considered.

Finally, having taken full account of the enemy and set him at a high value, he proceeds to look down upon him from his own point of view — the true formula for setting off our own superiority. Boyet may be all this, but as compared with Costard he is nothing — “Ah, heavens, it is a most pathetical nit! Sola, sola.”

A humble clodhopper like Costard naturally takes pride in being a connoisseur of that which he has not — bearing and brains, aristocracy and wit. The incident itself is funny in the connection in which it occurs, not to speak of the way it is worded. I think that future editors should be careful to let the passage remain where it is in the Folio. The last lines of a scene are an important position with Shakespeare.

## DEFECT OF JUDGMENT

*Belarius.* . . . . . I am absolute  
'T was very Cloten.

*Arviragus.* In this place we left them;  
I wish my brother make good time with him,  
You say he is so fell.

*Belarius.* Being scarce made up,  
I meane to man; For defect of judgement  
Is oft the cause of Feare.

(*First Folio, Cymbeline*, iv, 2)

CLARK and Wright and the generality of editors today adopt Theobald's emendation "effect of judgment" for "defect of judgment." Those who have retained the "defect" of the original change *cause to cure*, like Hanmer, or to *sauce*, like Staunton, or *loss*, like Nicholson, or *cease*, like Dowden. Or else, if they keep these two words of the Folio they change *Is* to *As*, like Knight. Of modern editors, Hudson changes *defect* to *act*, and the Elzevir edition puts *fearlessness* in place of fear. Altogether, commentators have not been able to see sense in the original text; and emendation has gone on continually because each editor has been equally unable to get satisfactory meaning out of the other emendations. After a great deal of this sort of effort, the best scholars have gone back to Theobalds' emendation — *effect*.

At first I was very much puzzled to under-

stand why so many men of ability should think emendation necessary; but after I had read Knight's note I saw. They have been trying to straighten it out on the supposition that this passage refers to Cloten. This is a misconception; it refers to the young Guiderius. There has been a general failure to follow Belarius' drift of thought. A few words of explanation will, I believe, make the matter plain.

The nobleman Belarius has for many years lived in hiding in the mountains, his home being a cave; and there he has brought up the two princes, Arviragus and Guiderius, from infancy. They are now strong, healthy-minded youths on the verge of manhood.

One day, to Belarius' consternation, there appears in the vicinity of the cave a fellow from the court—Cloten. He is the new queen's son. This Cloten is a brainless, blatant, swaggering sort of a bull-calf of a man. He always expected an opponent to be cowed by his mere announcement that he was the queen's *son*; and he accompanied this self-importance with a seeming ripeness for fight, a bluster and abandon, which, to anyone who had no experience with human nature, would be very fearsome.

By a turn of events the young Guiderius, who does not know Cloten, is left to cope with him while Belarius and Arviragus hurry away to look for other foes. Now, at the present point in the play these two are coming back,

and Arviragus is beginning to have fears for his brother. He does not know how he may have fared in combat with Cloten. He says to Belarius,

I wish my brother make good time with him,  
You say he is so fell.

Evidently Belarius has said something, as they came along, which led Arviragus to conclude that Cloten was a dangerous sort of man for his brother to encounter: "You say he is so fell." When Arviragus says this, Belarius sees at once that the boy has misunderstood his remarks. Cloten is not a dangerous man so far as bravery and swordsmanship are concerned; but he is dangerous to one who does not know him, because, being a blusterer and a "roaring terror," he has a way of putting an enemy into a fright before he starts to fight. All through the play we see that Cloten is that sort of wind-bag — a "roaring terror." He is not nearly as brave a man, nor as able a fighter, as young Guiderius; but Belarius, who knows Cloten of old, has been worrying, nevertheless, for he reasons that the boy, knowing little of human nature and never having come across a bully before, will be frightened by such bluster. The boys, not being cowards themselves, naturally take such show of valor to be genuine; and so, when Arviragus remarks, "You say he is so fell," Belarius immediately explains, as best he can, just what it is that has

been worrying him. His reply is substantially as follows:

What I meant was that your brother, having spent all his life in the hiding place in the mountains, and knowing little of human nature — “being scarce made up, I mean, to man” — had no understanding of a loud-mouthed bully — “had no apprehension of roaring terrors” — for it is often the case that though a man is no coward a misjudgment of what is before him is the cause of fear — “For defect of judgment is oft the cause of fear.” Guiderius was brave and an excellent swordsman; but such an outlandish pretender, to a boy whose experience had given him no means of judging such people, might put him in a panic.

I have here described the characters and the general situation and have quoted all the words of the refractory passage. As will be seen, I think, it is perfectly plain English. What, indeed, could Shakespeare write that would be more true to nature in this case? The trouble has been simply a failure to follow Belarius' natural course of thought. We should drop Theobald's unnecessary emendation, forget all about the commentators who have since worked over the supposed corrupt text, and get back to the exact words of the Folio. None of their emendations makes sense, and this does.

Knight explains his own text: “In this reading of *as* for *is*, Belarius says that Cloten, before he arrived to man's estate, had not

apprehension of terrors *on account of* defect of judgment, which defect is as often the cause of fear." Note that he thinks that the words refer to *Cloten* "*before he arrived to man's estate.*" Although I am not writing essays on the plays, I probably ought to add, to make sure that there will be no further emendation, that my interpretation is organic. That is to say, it is the one which is required by the interactions of the play and its effect upon the spectators. When Guiderius comes in to meet the other two, and we find that he has not only killed Cloten but cut his head off, we are surprised — and not unpleasantly. But an audience also enjoys surprise upon the part of the characters on the stage; and this gives an interesting turn to Belarius' fears for the inexperienced boy. If we have understood what he said, we understand what a surprise it is to Belarius; and this is the effect which Shakespeare was (organically) engaged upon.

## IGNORANCE A PLUMMET

*Falstaff.* Ignorance itself is a plummet over me.

(*Merry Wives of Windsor*, v, 5, 172)

LANGUAGE is “fossil poetry,” or, to put it more plainly, it is dead poetry. Our fore-fathers, the first talkers, had to invent ways of expressing themselves, and they frequently had to get around a new idea by means of comparison, live images, poetry in essence. We inherit these ready-made phrases; the fittest survived; but we are so used to them that they are mere signs of ideas; we do not have to look them over curiously and inspect the comparison in order to get the idea as would a man to whom it was said for the first time. A man speaking English does not think of the etymology, the derivation or poetic origin, of a familiar word. It is the same with our ready-made phrases as with words; we would no more think of looking into them and thinking what it is they are really saying than we would think of questioning why *man* means man. We already know the idea they stand for the moment they are said, and that is enough; but originally that was not enough; they had to be literally understood to catch the comparison or poetry. Thus language is dead poetry. It is

dead because we are no longer alive to the meanings. Some of these original meanings have become so lost in the back recesses of the human mind that they are beyond recovery.

For the sake of illustration, let us look in the face one of our everyday expressions — “He is sunk in the depths of ignorance.” Why this “sunk” and why this “depths”? There was originally an allusion, a comparison to something; and every figure of speech has two sides else it would fail of its very purpose. What mental picture, then, is it supposed to call up? It means of course that a man is very ignorant, but what was the exact vivid and visual concept which was supposed to come before the mind in order to enforce the meaning? “Sunk” would naturally remind us of water as being the thing we usually sink in; and “depths” would seem to have the same allusion. It certainly had some tacit reference; and can it be that an ignorant man is depicted as one whose nature is such that he seems to be in a semi-darkness, as in the depths of water, and that he there sits in the obscurity and gropes around in the darkness of his own mind? Or possibly sunk in a strange unexplored pit beneath the light and level of the average man? Such inquiries are so far from our everyday common-sense concern that they seem almost foolish — especially to the unimaginative mind.

But Shakespeare was *not* an unimaginative mind, nor an unthoughtful one. One of the

most interesting phases of his work is his curious interest in words with regard to their historical underlying poetry. The study of words is, in fact, a study in human nature and in psychology, for they tell interesting tales of the natural and fundamentally poetic mind; and to a poet and a worker in words it is all a matter to be deeply looked into. It is remarkable how often his ways of speech are simply current phrases put in different words to make them strike the mind anew; he had great confidence in the power of the original poetry of the mind. Most often, too, those allusions which we so easily call "puns" are a word-worker's curious interest in words *per se*.

I have made the above excursion merely by way of getting the reader's mind out of the normal everyday mood for a moment and into a Shakespearean attitude. Shakespeare's figures of speech are often so ingeniously fit that they illustrate more than we are accustomed to. It might be so in the famous obscurity "Ignorance is a plummet" which let us now examine.

When Shakespeare wrote this line he had a little problem before him, namely, to express not merely ignorance but extreme ignorance upon the part of Falstaff. It must have the humorous exaggeration characteristic of Falstaff, but at the same time, when seriously viewed from Falstaff's standpoint, it must convey an idea of his extreme feeling of humiliation. Falstaff was ignorant; extremely

ignorant. He was in fact *worse* than ignorant; so emphatically so that if Ignorance itself, ignorance absolute, were used as a standard of measurement, Falstaff would be found lower down in the scale.

Now how would Shakespeare go about expressing this so that the figure of speech would have the definiteness and at the same time the atmosphere and feeling required? First he considered *facts*. We measure entirely by comparison; therefore we have an established standard of comparison. In this case Ignorance *itself*, or ignorance absolute and to its final length of measurement, is the standard. And if the average man, familiar with ignorance itself, were thus to try to measure Falstaff's state of mind by comparison, Falstaff would be so far down that that standard of measurement would not reach the place.

The realm or atmosphere into which the comparison is put is in the deep obscurity of the sea — down there on the lowest level of things. And Falstaff was feeling like an outlandish creature when he said it; he had been so egregiously humiliated. Therefore, if the average intelligent person, one of the general run of folks, wished to conceive his mental position, ignorance itself, let down into the depths like a plummet into the sea, would fail to reach the spot and give an idea of his sunkenness. Ignorance itself, the standard of comparison, would be "a plummet over me."

Commentators, in struggling with this crux, have tried to see some aptness in the uses of a plumb-line as used by a mason to rectify and adjust. But plummet does not mean that in Shakespeare. It is not the name of the mason's tool but of the sailor's, and Shakespeare observed the distinction in his works. When he means the mason's tool he calls it a "line," as in the *Tempest*, where Trinculo says "we steal by line and level." That is to say, a mason then as today adjusted things with a line and bob, the latter being the lead on the end of the line. And when Shakespeare meant a plummet, a quite different thing as used for different purposes, he said so; as for instance in the *Tempest*—"I'll seek him deeper than e'er plummet sounded," and "deeper than did ever plummet sound I'll drown my book." And so, entirely regardless of whether my explanation is acceptable or not, we have got to accept what Shakespeare says. Being a plummet, it is a matter of depth. The plummet proper is the piece of lead on the end of the line; and this it is, according to the statement itself, that represents Ignorance itself, which is over him. Nothing could be plainer; and if we can follow no farther it is for lack of Shakespearean imagination.

The important point of the figure is that it is the average human being who is supposed to be measuring Falstaff; it is not Ignorance itself. The latter is only the standard of comparison, the plummet at its lowest. Philo-

sophically it is a recognition of the fact that we measure by comparison. Psychologically, or in respect of the mind itself, the figure is very true; for the intelligent mind cannot descend to the level even of Ignorance; but being familiar with it he might try to measure Falstaff's depth comparatively; and fail because Ignorance itself does not descend so low.

Samuel Johnson was so baffled here that he came to the conclusion that the word plummet was an error; he thought it ought to be *plume*.

The present state of conjecture is summed up in Professor C. F. Johnson's *Shakespeare and his Critics* (1909): "The exact meaning of this passage is obscure, but it is difficult to see how 'plume' enlightens it. Falstaff may mean, I am so shallow that ignorance can sound me with a plummet, or, ignorance can hold a plumb line to rectify my errors. The difficulty lies in the word 'over.'"

This last remark is to the point — the difficulty is in the word "over." And also, I might add, in the fact that "ignorance is a plummet over me." Holding a plumb-line and being a plummet are two different things.

## POMPEY

*Biron.* Greater than great, great, great, great Pompey.  
Pompey the huge.

(*Love's Labour's Lost*, v, 2, 691)

A GREAT deal is lost here through the failure of editors to perceive what is being said. The line needs to be repunctuated in order to bring out the point of view.

The passage occurs where the fun-loving companions of the French Princess and the king of Navarre are stirring up the clown Costard to fight Armado the braggart. In the little theatrical entertainment which these vain-glorious and ridiculous characters have been presenting before the royal party, Costard has acted the part of Pompey while Armado has strutted forth as Hector. In order to get Costard to take off his coat and fight Armado, the members of the royal party vie with each other in inflating his vanity still more. Printed as Shakespeare evidently wrote it, the line would come as follows:

*Dumain.* Most rare Pompey.

*Boyet.* Renowned Pompey.

*Biron.* Greater than great. Great great great Pompey.  
Pompey the Huge.

Besides making the words say the right thing, this accords with the Shakespearean art of

writing. The first short statement of Biron's brings out at once the point of view, namely, that Costard is greater than Pompey the Great. The audience having now caught the idea, the egregious title of great-great-great rolls up with increasing ridiculousness as applying to the mock Pompey before us. It is a main point of literary art to have a sentence or passage anticipate its construction or point of view. When anything requiring a slightly unusual point of view is to be conveyed, the art of anticipation is most important. The point of view is indicated at once, and then follows the richer unfolding.

But the trouble with this line, principally, is that after you have held the words in mind and got to the end it has not said the right thing. As universally printed, the four *greats* are made to refer to the Roman Pompey himself, than whom this mock Pompey is said to be greater. But Shakespeare did not intend to burlesque the historical Pompey. The ridiculous and grandparent-like title was intended to come in such a way as to refer to our country-clown Pompey of the stage. And as to the other objection which I find here, Shakespeare understood his art too well to have an actor come forth and deliver that mere string of words — great, great, great, great.

No particular editor or critic is responsible for the line as it stands. It has always been printed in this way.

## BRAKES OF ICE

Some rise by sin and some by virtue fall:  
Some run from brakes of ice and answer none:  
And some condemned for a fault alone.

(*Measure for Measure*, ii, 1, 39)

THE central fact of this play is that Angelo, the strict judge, was as guilty as the man he condemned; or rather more so. But while Claudio had been apprehended Angelo's deeper misdeed had never been brought to light. The one was caught and the other was not.

Hunting is done by two means, sight and scent. On ice it is difficult to hunt with hounds because ice will not retain the scent. In a brake it is impossible to hunt by sight because you cannot see nor make any speed if you did. Therefore, the most hopeless of all places to follow the fox or other beast of prey would be a frozen fen or a brake of ice.

The law catches some culprits for little faults committed in the open and fails to hunt down crafty malefactors who have succeeded in hiding their trail. A fox in an icy brake might run from the place where he had eaten his prey and never be caught.

The words of the passage have been changed in every conceivable way, but without success.

Possibly the above, which keeps the wording of the original and fits the general scheme of the plot, might be the solution. In the Globe it is marked with the obolus — hopelessly corrupt.

## THE TERRIBLE PISTOL

SCENE IV. *The field of battle. Alarum. Excursions.*

Enter *Pistol, French Soldier, and boy.*

*Pist.* Yield cur.

*Fr. Sold.* Je pense que vous êtes le gentilhomme de bonne qualité.

*Pist.* Qualtitie calmie custure me! Art thou a gentleman?

What is thy name? Discuss.

(Henry V, iv, 4, 4)

‘Qualtitie calmie custure me’; probably Pistol catches the last word of the French soldier’s speech, repeats it and adds the refrain of a popular Irish song, ‘Calen, O custure me’ = ‘colleen og astore,’ i.e. ‘young girl my treasure.’ The popularity of the song is evidenced by the following heading of one of the songs in Robinson’s *Hanful of Pleasant Delights* (cp. Arber’s reprint, p. 33): ‘A Sonet of a Lover in praise of his lady. To Calen o custure me; sung at euerie line’s end’; first pointed out by Malone.

(The present-day interpretation as given by Gollancz)

PISTOL is simply doing his best to speak French, as follows:—*Quel titre comme accoster me.* This inquiry, if he had not got it garbled into semi-English, his French prisoner could easily enough have understood to mean, *Tell me what your title is.* This, as we see by the rest of the scene, is exactly what Pistol on the battlefield was interested in knowing. The whole scene is based on Pistol’s anxiety to find out the title of any prisoner he might capture, whether of high or low degree, so that he might know how much ransom he would be able to

get. Naturally, when Shakespeare brings this amusing episode before our eyes on the field of Agincourt, the very first words from Pistol's mouth would be intended to show this interest in names or titles. The endeavors of Pistol will be better seen if we print what he was trying to say in line with what he did say.

Quel titre comme accoster me.  
Qual titie calmy custure me.

From our close acquaintance with the amusing Pistol in two plays we know his besetting vanity — words. He affected a bizarre and impressive manner of speech. However little he might amount to on the battlefield, there was nothing in the shape of language he would hesitate to undertake. Being an Englishman, his ear and mind would not accommodate themselves very easily to such a language as French. Its elusive shades of sound he would get into his mind in good round English terms. Hearing the word *comme* he would conceive it as *calmy*, for that is what it would naturally sound like to him; and so with the rest of the language.

Pistol had heard the sonorous Frenchmen say *Quel titre* (what name) and his hold on it was very elusive and uncertain. And so, in this scene, when the French nobleman addresses him as a “gentil-homme de bonne qualité,” he is influenced in his pronunciation by the latter word; especially as this was just the point he

was interested in. By its having to do with a man's *quality* or title, he got *Quel titre* very comfortably Anglicized in his mind as *quality*. This would be natural. As the English speak of a man's position as his "quality," Pistol, going to France and finding that *Quel titre* meant *what name* or *title*, would note the resemblance to his own word for social standing, and the nearest he would come to French, with that in mind, would be *quality*; — which would be very much like French when a Frenchman pronounced it trippingly on the tongue. Shakespeare devised this passage and gave us the cue in this *qualité* just before Pistol's *qualtitie* in order to show us the English soldier's confused state of mind with regard to French. Like the rest of us, Pistol had an instinct to speak French in English.

Shakespeare's audience at the Globe theatre, having seen Pistol in the Second Part of King Henry IV, would be familiar with his facility with high-flown speech — his prowess in words. He has a flow of bizarre grandiloquence second to no character in the plays except it be Don Adriano de Armado. And now to show him virtually tongue-tied — a mere babe in the matter of language with a boy to interpret for him — is about as funny a thing as could be done with Pistol.

Malone's conjecture regarding this passage, which has been the regular interpretation ever since it was propounded in 1821, is open to very

vital objections. It does not fit the character nor the demands of the situation. Why should an English soldier, who has captured a French nobleman and is all taken up with the idea of getting money from him, address him with the title of a tune, in Irish, which means, "young girl my treasure?" The theory upon which this is accepted is that Pistol considers this "as good as anything else" to say to a Frenchman. But Pistol was thinking of getting money, his mind was strictly bent upon that, and Pistol, whatever else he might have been, was no fool. He was greedy for spoils. Again, Shakespeare has a way of striking the keynote of a play or a scene in the very opening lines. This scene is taken up with Pistol's effort to find out this man's standing and scare as much money out of him as possible. Why then should not the opening line of the scene have to do with this? And besides, if Pistol was repeating the title of a tune in Irish, why does he not repeat the name of the "familiar" tune at all but something very different. What he says resembles the name of the tune in but one word. I think we must regard him as trying to speak French, especially as he makes a very fair attempt at it for an ignorant English soldier and says the very thing that the scene as a whole would require him to say.

## THE LIFE TO COME

*Macb.* If it were done when 't is done, then 't were well  
It were done quickly. If the assassination  
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch  
With his surcease success; that but this blow  
Might be the be-all and end-all here,  
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time  
We'd jump the life to come.

(*Macbeth*, i, 7, 7)

THE words *bank* and *shoal* do not refer to the same side of a body of water. They refer to two opposite sides of a stream, one side being a bank or bluff shore and the other a smooth slope of sand. The picture is that of a rider jumping his horse over such an obstruction. A horseman, in making a jump across a wide stream, prefers a place where the shore is slightly elevated on his own side and somewhat low and flat on the other — a bank and a shoal. If the reader will imagine a rider trying a wide leap toward a bluff shore, on the edge and slopes of which his horse will land athwart in case he falls short, he will readily see the reason for preparing a shoal of sand to light on. The elevation on his own side, of course, enables him to make a long jump. This same point of view applies to the passage which occurs nineteen lines further on in regard to "vaulting

ambition." Upon this basis I shall explain all the moot points in these two passages.

Two scenes previous to this, at i, 5, 19, Lady Macbeth, speaking of her husband's ambition to become king, fears that it will not be in his nature to catch "the nearest way." This was the forerunner, in Shakespeare's mind, of a point of view which he was to work out in more striking form when the time for Macbeth's decision should arrive.

The horseman presented to our imagination is a traveler. The goal of his ambition is in plain sight before him but a forbidding stream lies between himself and it. In riding along the shore a bank and shoal present themselves to his view. Here is an advantage; shall he take it or not? Being impatient to cross, he is disposed to make light of a risky jump. But on second thoughts and further view he realizes that his ambition is tempting him to spur his animal on to a leap which might have serious consequences. If a horse makes a leap beyond his ordinary ability, taking a wide downward jump so that he is unable to sustain himself on alighting, the results are likely to be disastrous. Here the man's confidence begins to desert him; he sees that he has more ambition than he may be able to carry out —

I have no spur  
To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
Vaulting ambition which o'erleaps itself  
And falls on th' other —

Why is this place called the bank and shoal of *time*? A horseman in such a case, with his destination plainly in view, and therefore very near to it in one regard, may yet be very far away from it as a matter of fact. He will have to follow along till he comes to some appointed way of getting over, a bridge, a ford or a favorable place to swim and make a landing. In this life our fond hopes and ambitions hold their objects very plainly before the mind's eye; but we have to follow down the obstructing stream of time till our opportunity arrives, if ever. The actual horseman in this case would have to keep on till the time came to get across; therefore this stream, to all practical intents and purposes, is time. If he can manage to leap across it at once he is virtually leaping across so much time; therefore the bank and shoal between which his leap was made would be the bank and shoal of time.

These two passages, which I have not yet quite fully considered, form a picture which serves as a lively and illuminating parallel to Macbeth's case. He believes thoroughly in the prophecy of the witches that he shall be king; both he and Lady Macbeth see the promised land before them; but it is a matter of time and very indefinite in that regard. Suddenly a bank and shoal presents itself; King Duncan comes to spend the night under their roof. It is an inviting advantage, though risky; if Macbeth kills the king his own future

will have arrived at once. The opportunity enchains his attention and he expresses his conflicting emotions in the language of a horseman — which Macbeth was. If he thought there would be no fatal consequences he would decide at once to "jump the life to come."

This "life to come" does not refer to the hereafter as many critics have thought, at least not primarily. As he betrays no compunctions about the future, being wholly absorbed in his one ambition, this would be somewhat out of character. It means that he will jump right into the life of a king, which the prophecy has told him is sometime coming to him, and over the intervening time.

Shakespeare scholars will recognize in these two passages a considerable source of trouble to past generations. On account of some evasive quality about the lines, there has been a signal failure to connect the two parts of the soliloquy as having any relation to each other, whereas they are part and parcel of the one mental picture. The lay reader who may now consider it too simple to require explanation will find by reference to annotated editions an interesting study in the psychology of Shakespearean criticism.

## BADE THEE STAND UP

But he that tempered thee bade thee stand up,  
Gave thee no instance why thou should'st do treason,  
Unless to dub thee with the name of traitor.

(Henry V, ii, 2, 118)

THE obscurity which invests this passage has caused the words “tempered” and “stand up” to be a fruitful source of emendation and conjecture. The present-day understanding of Henry’s remark is probably stated by Gollancz as well as any:

“No emendation is necessary, tho’ it is uncertain what the exact force of ‘*bade thee stand up*,’ may be, whether (1) ‘like an honest man,’ or (2) ‘rise in rebellion.’”

From an examination of emendations from the time of Johnson, and the nature of the critical query of today, it appears that critics have missed the idea that Lord Scroop is being regarded by Henry as a *devil’s knight* and do not realize what this implies.

A knight practised goodness just for the sake of goodness. He went about protecting the oppressed, assisting the helpless and fighting the battles of those who were wronged, and with no object whatever except to do good. Chivalry was the aristocratic flower of Christianity; it was not limited to doing to others as

you would have them do to you, but went about aggressively doing good to the complete sacrifice of self. It was active goodness just for the ideal of doing good.

A devil's knight therefore would be one who practiced evil just for the sake of being bad. He would be an entirely gratuitous and unrewarded miscreant — a man who did not even need an excuse for his badness. He would belong to the chivalry of evil.

For King Henry to address Scroop from such a point of view would express his sentiments exactly. Henry was baffled to know why Scroop, who had been his most intimate and favored friend, should conspire against him and prove a traitor. The only possible view he could take was that Scroop was one of those natures that are gratuitously bad. This seemed to be so strongly the truth of the matter that Henry expressed it by the powerful image of a man who had been consecrated to evil deeds as a knight is consecrated to good ones. He was a devil's knight; and just as a Christian king might dub a knight by some fit and distinctive title, so the devil had dubbed him Sir Traitor.

We are now in a position to answer the modern query as to the exact force of the words *stand up*.

When a nobleman was raised to knighthood, it was the custom, after the king had struck him across the shoulders with the royal sword and dubbed him by his new name, to tell him to *stand up*. The practice shows itself in several

places in Shakespeare: "Iden kneel down. Rise up a knight," (2 Henry VI, v, 1, 78). "I will make myself a knight presently. Rise up Sir John Mortimer," (2 Henry VI, iv, 2, 128). Moreover, a man who espoused knighthood in the Middle Ages did it out of emulation of renowned Christian examples and a regard for high religious principles; he would therefore, in being knighted, have recalled to his mind these great "instances" of reasons and examples for being a knight. Shakespeare, in depicting Scroop as a devil's knight, used these expressions "stand up," and "gave thee no instance," so that King Henry's shaft would be driven home with a still deeper irony. The devil, as the text says, did not need to do this with Scroop — such ceremonies were unnecessary in his case. The devil, seeing what sort of man he had before him, knew that Scroop would not need to be incited to deeds of badness by great examples of evil; he could be depended upon to do bad without reason or example. And so the devil simply struck him with the sword as he knelt and then said, "Stand up." That was all. In short, there was no use in his being knighted at all except that he aspired to the title — Traitor.

Such words, addressed to Scroop, who was himself a nobleman and understood all that knighthood implied, would stab to the quick. He was guilty of the worst sort of traitorship — not only to his king but to his friend. Henry

would naturally feel this bitterly; and so Shakespeare had to express it with adequate force.

If the reader will refer to the text he will see that this passage is preceded by seven lines which speak of a “cunning fiend” who “got the voice in hell” for the way in which he wrought upon Scroop. This is generally understood, of course, as referring to a devil; but why this image has not been carried on by critics and applied to the continuing lines I do not understand. To be sure, there is no reference to knighthood anywhere except as it is alluded to in these three lines by such words as “dubbed” and “stand up.” There seems to have been a general failure to catch the essential idea as applied to the general circumstances. All this Shakespeare conveyed in three lines.

I might add that “tempered” is a figurative usage. The king struck the candidate for knighthood across the shoulder with his sword; it was at this moment that he became a knight. There is an implication that this sudden metamorphosis is like the tempering of metal, which is changed by striking. In keeping with Shakespeare’s word-use it also has, faintly and secondarily, its usual meaning of compounding or mixing ingredients, hence making.

## AY AND NO

*Lear.* No they cannot touch me for coining. I am the king himself.

*Edgar.* O thou side-piercing sight.

*Lear.* Nature's above art in that respect. There's your press-money. That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper; draw me a clothier's yard. Look, look, a mouse. Peace, peace; this piece of toasted cheese will do 't. There's my gauntlet; I'll prove it on a giant. Bring up the brown bills. O well flown bird. I' the clout, i' the clout! Hewgh! Give the word.

*Edgar.* Sweet Marjoram.

*Lear.* Pass.

*Gloucester.* I know that voice.

*Lear.* Ha! Goneril, with a white beard. They flattered me like a dog, and told me I had the white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say "ay" and "no" to everything that I said! "Ay" and "no" too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words; they told me I was everything; 't is a lie, I am not ague-proof.

(*Lear*, iv, 6, 83)

THE trouble in the above passage is the remark, "To say 'ay' and 'no' to everything that I said! 'Ay' and 'no' too was no good divinity." The traditional editorial note which, in lack of anything better, is still doing service in all annotated editions, is — "Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay." (Matthew 5; 37). What this has to do with the sense here is never touched upon. It is just a con-

jecture that this is the “allusion”—as if Shakespeare made allusions without any idea.

When we understand Shakespeare’s method of depicting insanity throughout his works, it is easy enough to see where Lear got this “ay” and this “no.” There had just resounded, in slow impressive tones, on Lear’s irresponsible brain, the words—“I—know—that voice.”

Shakespeare, in depicting insanity, shows the mind as being the shuttlecock of chance suggestion. The songs of Ophelia have several features which would make an interesting illustration of this way of work; but for our present purpose it will be better to illustrate the point from the passage in which this “ay” and “no” occur.

Lear calls for them to bring up the “brown bills,” these being soldiers who carried halberds or bills which were painted brown to keep them from rusting. This “bills” reminds him of a bird, a falcon, and this immediately makes him think of a feathered arrow flying to its mark—“O, well flown bird”—and as the arrow hits the center of the target or clout the imaginary target-tender gives the “word” as to how the arrow flew; but immediately this “word” becomes changed in Lear’s mind to the idea of a password, and so, when the wondering and grieved Edgar exclaims “Sweet marjoram,” Lear takes it for the call to the sentinel and answers “Pass.”

Here is a close-knit, if irrational, succession

of ideas; they spring out of one another upon the mere suggestion of words — first one reminder and then another. On the same principle, the “ay and no” conception was started up in Lear’s mind by Gloucester’s “*I — know — that voice.*” So also the “Peace, peace,” reminded him of a “piece” of something — which for his present purposes happened to be cheese.

The insane mind, in its highly imaginative form, is the prey of the least suggestion; and like the sane mind it moves easiest along the line of similarities, as in these cases. Next to ideas aroused by mere similarities of words, Lear’s mind most easily enlarges upon an idea by thinking of its opposite. “There’s your press-money.” That moment he is thinking of war; he has enlisted or impressed a soldier, and the soldier does not draw the bow to suit him. Suddenly his mind jumps to “Peace, peace; this piece of toasted cheese will do ’t.” The very opposite of military power, brute force, is the small shrewdness of catching a mouse. From thinking of war he thought of peace, and the suggested “piece” furnished him with just what he wanted — something quite shrewd and the very opposite of war. Lear had been anything but shrewd all through his life; and the mind always likes to think itself that which it is not. But instantly there is a reaction and he is the old mandatory Lear who knows nothing but power — “there’s my gauntlet; I’ll prove it on a giant.” And finally

he ends with thinking himself very shrewd indeed — “when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found ‘em, there I smelt ‘em out.” This passage is a study of mind, character and personal history. The unbalanced mind, as Shakespeare shows it, does not lack idea; it lacks continuity of thought.

What idea, then, are we to get from these words, “To say ‘ay’ and ‘no’ to everything that I said! ‘Ay’ and ‘no’ too was no good divinity.” This is a question which does not seem ever to have been satisfactorily answered. White queries, “Why should his knights say ‘ay’ and ‘no’ to everything he said?”

The first Folio has it: “To say I, and no, to every thing that I said: I, and no too, was no good divinity.” The first Quarto reads: “saide, I and no toe, was,” etc. Inasmuch as our modern reading is an editorial correction of the Folio, which is as usual punctuated at random, I think that if I were editing the play I should not long hesitate to adopt a suggestion made several generations ago: “To say ay and no to everything that I said ay and no to was no good divinity.”

Lear’s one great lesson had been that his followers were self-seeking flatterers; they did not tell him the truth about himself. A man who will say ay or no to anything whatever, according as his interest lies, is simply a liar; and lying is no good divinity. A “clothier’s yard” does not refer to a particular sort of yard

as a standard of measurement; it is the distance from the tip of the nose to the end of the thumb when the arm is stretched out sidewise. A Bowman who could draw a clothier's yard was one who, when the butt of the shaft was at his nose, had the strength to force the bow out the full length of the arm. While there is such a thing as a "clothier's yard" in measurement, it is no different from any other yard except in the way the yardstick is divided — and this, of course, is not the reference in speaking of the Bowman's ability. An archer of size and strength had to have an arrow of such length that he could use it in this way; and so, when the "Ballad of Chevy Chase" (to which commentators refer) speaks of "an arrow of a cloth-yard long" it refers to this ability and not to a standard of measurement. I have added this note because Shakespeare notes and vocabularies seem undecided or evasive regarding the exact meaning. "*Clothier's yard — a cloth-yard shaft was a term for the old English arrow.*" (Globe editors.)

## GRACE AND HIGHNESS

*Westmoreland.* They know your grace hath cause and means and might;  
So hath you<sup>M</sup>highness; never king of England  
Had nobles richer,— *etc.*

(Henry V, i, 2, 126)

WESTMORELAND addresses Henry V by his two titles separately. This puzzled Coleridge, who wrote: "Perhaps the lines ought to be recited dramatically, thus:

They know your Grace hath cause and means and might;—  
So hath your Highness — never king of England  
*Had nobles richer, &c.*"

Hanmer, who was speaker of the House of Commons, amended to *race*; but Coleridge's explanation with the accent on *hath* and *had* became the standard acceptance. Knight used it (1843) but of later editors Staunton amended. He thought it necessary to change *hath* to *haste*. The exact idea here seems to be still clouded.

"Grace" as applied to a king refers, of course, to the fact that he reigns by divine favor and guidance. "Your Grace" points upward to his relations to heaven; "Your highness" alludes to his earthly elevation as regards the rest of humanity. Shakespeare put them in this separate and peculiar way in order to bring them out as *words* and emphasize them in their es-

sential meaning; and he did this for a particular purpose.

The wild Prince Hal, whom the audience at the Globe Theater had learned to associate with such company as Falstaff and Doll Tear-sheet and Mrs. Quickly and all that red-lattice crew, now comes forward in a new play, "Henry V." Prince Hal is king. Note how the play opens:—

"The king is full of grace and fair regard," says the Archbishop of Canterbury talking privately to the Bishop of Ely.

"And a true lover of the holy church," adds Ely.

"The courses of his youth promised it not," continues Canterbury.

"We are blessed in the change," reflects Ely.

"Hear him but reason in divinity, and, all admiring, with an inward wish, you would desire the king were made a prelate; hear him debate of commonwealth affairs," *etc.*

There had been little hope that Prince Hal would ever amount to much. The Globe audience — who had known all along that Hal was only having his fling and did not take low life too seriously — must have enjoyed this vindication of their good opinions of him. There is deep humor in the puzzlement of the reverend Archbishop that such perfect kingly deportment should manifest itself in him.

Scene two keeps right on with this theme of grace in the king. We now see it not merely

stated but in practical operation. And we perceive that the dignitaries of the church have good reason for their high opinions of him. He consults them in matters of importance. He recognizes them in their particular branch of government. He gives them work to do.

Being about to go to war with France, he makes great question of his moral right in the point at issue; and it is for the clergy to decide this question regarding the Salic law. The Archbishop has been given this matter to "justly and religiously unfold," and now in Scene two he comes in with his report in hand. The verdict of the Archbishop is that the king has the law on his side. But Henry is not satisfied. "*May I with right and conscience make this claim?*"

"For in the book of Numbers is it writ," answers the churchman, proceeding to show that religion will not be violated. The rest of his noblemen now lend him their voices in favor of the step. It is in this connection, with Westmoreland's speech, that we have the peculiar passage. Henry has put the whole stress on a question of *moral* right; hence it is easy to see why Shakespeare had the Earl begin, "They know your grace hath cause and means and might" — which is to say, he is justified before heaven as a king of grace. "*They know*" (Canterbury and Ely) because they have looked into the law and consulted the Bible.

No question had been made as to the physical

power to win the victory over France. It was the king's conscience that was being satisfied. But now Westmoreland, representing the temporal power, adds, "So hath your highness." The effect of this separate address of Henry by his temporal title is to set off the other title in its essential meaning and emphasize it. It is this particular view of the much-changed Prince Hal that Shakespeare is setting forth — he has become a king in all its branches. And in no way could it be so effectively emphasized. In short, these words are in keeping with the whole organism of the play, with regard to character, up to this point.

Possibly a few stanzas of a poem by Stephen Hawes (1506) which I recently came across, would be of interest in this connection:

To the high and mighty Prince, Henry the Seventh, by the grace of God king of England, and of France, Lord of Ireland, etc.

Right mighty prince, and redoubted sovereign,  
Sailing forth well in the ship of grace  
Over the waves of life uncertain,  
Right toward heaven to have dwelling place;  
Grace doth you guide in every doubtful case;  
Your governance doth evermore eschew  
The sin of sloth, enemy to virtue.  
Grace stirreth well; the grace of God is great  
Which you have brought to your royal see,  
And in your right it hath you surely set  
Above us all to have the sovereignty;  
Whose worth, power and regal dignity  
All our rancor and our debate 'gan cease  
And hath us brought both wealth and rest and peace.

• • • • •

92 SOME TEXTUAL DIFFICULTIES IN SHAKESPEARE

Your noble grace and excellent highness  
For to accept I beseech right humbly  
This little book, *etc.*

This shows plainly enough what a king's "grace" meant to the mind of an Englishman four hundred years ago. Note "your noble grace and excellent highness," the then form of address.

## LAFEU

*Clown.* Why, sir, if I cannot serve you I can serve as great a prince as you are.

*Lafeu.* Who's that? A Frenchman?

*Clown.* Faith, sir, 'a has an English name; but his fisnomy is more hotter in France than there.

*Lafeu.* What prince is that?

*Clown.* The black prince, sir; alias, the prince of darkness; alias, the devil.

*Lafeu.* Hold thee, there's my purse; I give thee not this to suggest thee from thy master thou talkest of; serve him still.

*Clown.* I am a woodland fellow, sir, that always loved a great fire; and the master I speak of ever keeps a good fire.

(All's Well, iv, 5, 41)

NOTES on this pass of wit seem to have gone astray because the commentators have missed the point of the clown's joke. The clown's whole allusion is to the fact that in French *Lafeu* (*la feu*) means *the fire*. From this he would infer that Lafeu, as shown by his family name, is a relative of the devil. It was simply because this idea occurred to him that Shakespeare wrote the passage at all. He started out with that allusion in mind, played around it for the fun of mystifying Lafeu, and then drove it home to the denser heads among the audience by tacit reference to a fire, twice repeated.

Notes in all editions of Shakespeare have centered around the words "an English name," and "his fisnomy is more hotter," from which

we have the conclusion that Shakespeare's allusion "*is obviously to the Black Prince.*" That is to say, the son of the English king, Edward III, defeated the French at the battles of Crecy and Poictiers; and this is held to be the explanation of the clown's allusion in "an English name" which is "more hotter in France" than in England.

This is not the primary allusion at all. The clown begins by saying that he can find service with "as great a prince" as the man he is talking to, and when Lafeu inquires who that prince may be, he replies that he has an English name, meaning simply that his name in English is the Devil; but in France he has a "hotter" fisnomy or name, which is, of course Lafeu, or *fire*. The reference is wholly to the name Lafeu and the fun consists in the clown's calling him a devil without his seeing the point.

Hanmer, not being able to see how "hotter" could belong in this passage, emended it to *honoured*; and to this day there is a wavering inclination to this conjecture as can be seen by Gollancz's note: "Hanmers' proposal '*honour'd*' for '*hotter*' seems to be a most plausible emendation."

In the First Folio, the only source of this play, the text reads "an English Maine." It was Rowe who corrected it to *name*, thinking however that the allusion was to the "name" of the son of Edward III. Certain zealous adherents of the First Folio still contend that

*maine* is correct, explaining that in English morality plays the devil was a “very hairy personage”; therefore the reference to his “mane.” What I have here pointed out ought to settle all doubt regarding these moot points in the text.

If further proof is needed we have but to read farther along. When young Bertram comes home from the wars with his face all scarred up, Lafeu makes mention of it, whereupon the Clown makes rejoinder:—

*Lafeu.* A scar nobly got, or a noble scar, is a good livery of honour; so belike is that.

*Clown.* But it is your carbonadoed face.

Note the idea of fire still running in the clown’s mind whenever he talks to Lafeu. “Carbonadoed” = Fr. *carbonnade*, from the Latin *carbo*, a coal, meaning carbonadoed meat, which was slashed or scored preparatory to broiling. When the Clown addresses Lafeu he cannot get it out of his mind that his name means fire and that a man with such a hot name must be related to the devil. The intimation is that Bertram’s face (who was none too moral a liver) was all ready for the devil’s privy kitchen — an idea that we have again in “Henry IV” regarding Bardolph. And so we can have no further mystery as to whether the proper word is “name” or how that name is “hotter” in France than in England.

## BEYOND COMMISSION

IN the "Winter's Tale," Act I, Scene 2, there occurs a long passage which no one has been able to read. There are ten lines altogether, beginning with line 137. It is of signal interest in the fact that, despite all effort, it yields up no certain meaning either in part or as a whole; it is totally dark.

Leontes, king of Sicily, is speaking to his little son Mamillius who stands beside him:

Most dear'st! My collop! Can thy dam? — may't be? —  
Affection! thy intention stabs the centre;  
Thou dost make possible things not so held,  
Communicat'st with dreams; — how can this be? —  
With what's unreal thou co-active art,  
And fellow'st nothing. Then 't is very credent  
Thou may'st co-join with something; and thou dost,  
And that beyond commission, and I find it,  
And that to the infection of my brains  
And hardening of my brows.

Furness in this case recommends to his readers the view of Collier who wrote:—"Not one of the commentators, ancient or modern, has concurred with another in the poet's meaning, and there can be little hesitation in coming to the conclusion that mishearing, misrecitation, and misprinting have contributed to the obscurity of what, possibly, was never very intelligible to common readers or auditors."

Furness does not attempt to give a solution himself, nor does he see enough plausibility in the various conjectures upon the passage to make any choice between them. There has, in fact, been no complete solution offered—nothing which takes up every word and line and brings forth a central idea which fits the play. I therefore offer the following explanation, which, I think, proves itself.

In these obscure lines, Leontes is preparing his mind for the resolve to kill his wife. He is clearing away a mental obstacle; and he does it by a course of reasoning. A mental obstacle must be overcome by mental means.

As for killing Hermione, he has not the least compunction insofar as she is merely his wife. He suspects her of adultery with the king of Bohemia; and that is enough. But the little boy Mamillius is the idol of his soul, the apple of his eye—a perfect being in his estimation. Hermione is the boy's mother; she produced this perfect good; and whenever the enraged Leontes looks upon the boy he sees her in that light and his resolve to kill her is baffled. Moreover this puts a new light on his deed. Insofar as she is his own wife, he is responsible to himself. But in doing away with her he would be killing Mamillius' mother; and there he feels himself unable to give the command. It touches too closely upon the person of his boy. Indeed, for him to pronounce her utterly and wholly bad—as he must conclude before he

can feel justified in ordering her death — offers a difficulty in itself; for how can he think the mother of such a boy utterly bad? He cannot.

Here then is a problem, a mental difficulty to be overcome if possible. Any reader who has the imagination to put himself in Leontes' place must see that this would be a very real and genuine mental difficulty — it would be inevitable. Any true reader of Shakespeare must know that he would not have Leontes plunge ahead and condemn his wife to death without giving any thought to its bearing upon a boy so idolized. To do so would not only be untrue to life, but it would be neglecting an opportunity for showing inner turmoil which makes true drama — a thing Shakespeare never did. Whatever Shakespeare did, he was never forgetful of the deeper activities of human nature which make a story vital. We have either got to conclude that he had Leontes decide to kill Hermione deliberately, but without the least thought of his boy's relation to her, or else we have got to be prepared to find the subject taken up in these lines, for it certainly occurs nowhere else in the play.

Leontes' mental dilemma was a hard one to deal with. How is he to overcome this inability utterly to condemn and kill this boy's mother? Plainly, there is but one way. He must convince himself that, though he knows her to be his legitimate parent, she is *not* his parent in any deep essential way. What is needed is a

point of view. This point of view is, after all, not far to be gone for nor farfetched when brought to view; for as a matter of fact it can be shown with perfectly good logic that Hermione is *not* the boy's mother in any deep sense — he does not take after her in any way. He is another Leontes in every detail of feature and disposition.

At great length (21 lines) and with the utmost emphasis, Shakespeare has preceded this passage with a course of thought which is intended to lead up to and enforce upon us this necessary point of view. The dramatist is most ingenious in the little natural touches by which he brings forth the idea which he wishes to impress us with. Leontes sees a smudge on the little boy's nose and he at once busies himself with cleaning off that nose which "is a copy out of mine." This is simply to force upon the mind of the audience that Mamillius is like his father in every physical detail. In all, they are, even in public repute, as Leontes says, "almost as like as eggs." This point of view at much length and particularity of thought, comes immediately before the passage in question.

Now, immediately *after* the dark passage Shakespeare takes up the other half of their resemblance — their inner selves. Leontes, to test the boy, asks him a question which, in Elizabethan times, savored of insult: "Will you take eggs for money?" At once the little Mamillius replies, "No, my lord, I'll fight"; and

as this is just what the father would do in any case where he considered himself imposed upon, Leontes is delighted. Not only their outer features but their dispositions are the same — the boy takes after him and not his mother.

Let us now ask ourselves a candid question. And if we are willing to believe that Shakespeare was a great organizer of material in view of the end to be accomplished — without which surpassing ability he would not be a great dramatist — we have got to answer accordingly. If we find a dark passage completely surrounded, and in the most methodic and philosophic way, with the one point of view, are we not to conclude that the dark passage has something to do with that same point of view? It comes between; it has been led up to and then finally and fundamentally concluded. The introductory point of view is that Mamillius is *not* like his mother; and the conclusion is a still deeper view of this same fact — it is all one course of thought.

In view of this systematic work, our conclusion must be that the passage *does* have a meaning and that it was carefully intended to be understood. This being the case I may now state, in a preliminary way, what Leontes' course of reasoning is in these exclamatory lines. His point of view, which is quite simple and, in fact, quite logical, is as follows.

As Mamillius is not like his mother in any

way, being an exact reproduction of Leontes himself, their natures have nothing in common; and as she transmitted nothing to him she is not his mother in any sense that needs to be seriously regarded. She is the mere matrix, the purely physical means by which another Leontes was produced. A mere animal function, for as she gave him nothing of his soul or features, any other woman would have served as well. Therefore she is *not* his mother. She is a mere woman.

There is something strange here, Leontes ponders — something exceeding strange; for how is a soul begotten? He begins to think deeply upon this mystery. Where there was but one inner nature like himself there are now two — another soul which is attuned in all its workings to his own! With what mysterious source did he communicate to woo forth from nature that mind and spirit which is a counterpart of his own? Certainly it was no communication with her that did it; for as she has nothing of that nature she could not shape it forth; she could not contribute anything, for the boy is pure Leontes. She could not conceive that nature; only his own mind could conceive it. With what mysterious source, therefore, he asks himself, did he communicate; and how was it done? His answer is that the boy, that essential spirit, came simply from the secret, central source in nature itself. It was his yearning, his longing, his own passionate

soul-power which reached out and called forth a being, a soul, from the very centre of life itself; and that soul, being the result of his own yearning and conception, was the reproduction of himself. This is procreation in truth; himself and nature. In very truth — and the very image and deportment of the boy bear witness to the fact — he is the sole parent of the boy. The woman was a mere medium that he came through — what he calls, in his revery, the “sluice.” Once he saw things in this light Hermione ceased instantly to be the boy’s mother in any way that mattered. At that moment the difficulty in his mind was overcome; he saw his way clear to accuse and kill her.

This a strange interpretation of these lines, is it not? It sounds rather strained and ingenious, possibly? Look then at Leontes’ own state of mind in regard to the whole matter, “Can thy dam? — may’t be? — how can this be? — ”. He is in a mood of wonder over the whole mystery; therefore our interpretation of the lines, if they were merely commonplace in their point of view, could hardly be true to the text itself, its very mood and circumstance. Thoughts which excite wonder in the speaker must be a little unusual in the interpretation. He thought deeply in his mental dilemma; and suddenly this whole point of view struck him as a revelation. It took him by surprise; he followed the idea eagerly; and this is the

reason that the lines are so quick and fragmentary.

Leontes uses the word "intention." In Shakespeare's time intention meant *aim*; it was so used in archery to designate the centering of the mind upon the target. The mysterious source of life, he calls "the centre." This is a figure of speech which does not relate to archery alone. In the Ptolemaic view of astronomy, which was held in Shakespeare's day, the whole universe was supposed to revolve around the centre of the earth. Some mysterious power in that central point of the earth held the spheres in their appointed places; it was the very soul of the universe. Leontes therefore uses it, figuratively, to express the central source or essential power of nature. Shakespeare has used this figure in other places, as in the Sonnets where he calls the human soul "the centre of my sinful earth." It stands for spirit or the mysterious source as opposed to the mere material; and Leontes' point of view is the same.

We are now in a position to take up the passage *verbatim* and put our interpretation to the strict test. Does it fit every word and sentence in the passage? That must decide the matter. Before we start, let me ask the reader to observe that the passage does not advance from one reason to another, by logical steps. It is not a gradually reasoned-out thing. It is a continual repetition of the *same thing* in different words

and from different points of view. It is just the one sudden idea that Leontes has and he repeats it over and over; therefore I must deal repeatedly with the one idea in taking up the several lines. The fact that the passage is of this peculiar nature, must, I think, make our knowledge absolute; for I hope no one will give me credit, in point of ingenuity, of being so skilful a word-twister that I can take up any long set of lines and make them all mean the same thing. If they all fit the idea it must be because Shakespeare made them to express that idea.

Sweet villain!

Most dear'st! my collop! Can thy dam?—may't be?—

Here the whole query suddenly strikes Leontes' mind. "Can thy dam?—" is his unfinished question to himself; it is broken off by the depth of his revery. His whole question would be: Can it be possible that your mother (thy dam) has had any real part in the production of a boy who is totally different from herself? How could *she*, by any powers of her own, conceive and produce *my* nature?

We might note here that a "collop" was a small piece of meat cut off another. In the present connection it is equivalent to calling the boy "a chip of the old block." Note also that Leontes has already conceived her as performing a mere animal function in motherhood: he uses the animal term for mother—"dam."

Here follows his answer to this query five times repeated.

Affection! thy intention stabs the centre.

The emphasis should come strongly on “thy” and “intention,” meaning that the boy’s nature was begotten by the intense desire and passionate aim of his own nature; it was this intense desire of his, and nothing else, that reached out and communicated with the very centre and source of life and brought a Mamillius forth. It was the soul-power of his own “intention,” not anything of the mere physical woman’s nature that did it.

Thou dost make possible things not so held.

We must remember that *Affection* is the subject of all these sentences; it is the thing he is addressing, abstractly, throughout. What is generally held to be impossible is to make something out of nothing. As Mamillius did not receive his substance from his father, in a material sense, nor his spirit and essential nature from his mother, his soul and character came into being through nothing but Leontes’ peculiar powers of affection reaching out to that mysterious centre of nature, a source without substance, and bringing a Mamillius forth. Therefore this strange power can make something out of nothing: it “dost make possible things not so held.” It is this strange paradox which enchains Leontes’ imagination — espe-

cially as it is an evident fact when viewed in this way.

With what's unreal thou co-active art.

This is simply saying the same thing. He is amplifying it in other ways of expression. The "co-active" makes Shakespeare's allusion to the act of procreation most definite and unmistakable. "With what's unreal," means source without substance, nothing — the same as before.

And fellow'st nothing.

It is driven home to our understanding once again. "Fellow'st" is a choice of word which still has a view to procreation. It was an act between himself and this invisible source; the woman was a mere physical interposition.

He has now stated the idea to himself (and to us) in a variety of ways. He has been trying to achieve expression of this peculiar thing.

Then 't is very credit  
Thou may'st co-join with something.

He now comes to a triumphant deduction. One thing has been in his mind which would seem to be an obstacle to his conclusion that Hermione had nothing essential to do with the production of the boy. It is the fact that she *did* co-join. But this, in view of what he has already reasoned, makes no difference, the conclusion being as follows. If the begetting of the boy's nature was accomplished by his power of "affection" acting upon an immaterial source, the mere centre or principle of nature,

then it was a thing entirely apart from the physical or material. Therefore 'tis very credent that he might co-join with something, and yet this material or physical something would have nothing to do with the essential creation, because that is not in the realm of the mere physical or material. In other words, he might co-join with Hermione in her material and physical functions, but as the boy is not of mere physical origin, she would have no essential part in his creation as a human soul. "'Tis very credent" he says. In fact it is perfectly logical from the facts of the case and the premises set down. Thus Hermione is totally eliminated from any relationship to the boy except in a mere material sense. The word "something" here is used in the sense of a material body or thing, as opposed to nothing out of which a human soul or nature is made.

Then 't is very credent  
Thou may'st co-join with something; and thou dost  
And that beyond commission.

"Beyond commission" means beyond the commission of a mere physical act. He co-joins *with* something material, but the essential act of creation is in a realm far beyond the commission of the act itself. From which it will be seen that he is saying the same thing again.

And that beyond commission. And I find it—

The emphasis should be on "I." It was *he*, not Hermione, that by the power of affection, the intense soul-passion and desire, reached out

and found another nature like himself in that realm beyond “something” or the mere material, beyond “commission” or the mere committing of a material act. The whole idea is here emphasized again. It was *he* that found that soul, not Hermione.

And I find it,

And that to the infection of my brains

And hardening of my brows.

This, the end of the passage, is an allusion to a current term for cuckoldry which we need not go into as it is not a part of the course of reasoning. It is his mere conclusion in which he now turns with embittered thought to Hermione's supposed infidelity.!

We have now examined this long passage internally, and with regard to its immediate context, and in relation to the plot as a whole. As Leontes would not naturally kill Hermione without some thought of the boy's interests, her relations to him, we see that some such course of thought is an essential part of the plot. This play, which almost ends as a tragedy and virtually is one, has for its most tragic interest the condemning of Hermione to death. Leontes, mad with suspicion and burning for revenge, finds this obstacle to his action—the idea of her motherhood to the boy. In this sudden mental crisis, a storm of inner action which leaves only the broken fragments of sentences in its wake, the obstacle disappears. From this point the fate of Hermione is

sealed and the whole course of tragic experience is started. This passage is therefore the very pivot on which the plot of the play revolves.

Staunton, having caught correctly at the meaning of such words as "co-join," seems to be the only critic to have suspected that the passage has physiological allusion. He explains: "Leontes asks, 'Can it be possible a mother's vehement imagination should penetrate even to the womb, and there imprint upon the embryo what stamp she choose? Such apprehensive fantasy, then, he goes on to say, 'we may believe will readily co-join with something tangible, and it does; etc.'" Staunton's idea of its significance seems to be that, as Hermione was a woman of strong imagination, which is brought out by the fact that Mamillius bears so close a resemblance to his father, she might easily be beguiled into an attachment for Polixenes. While this is an oceanwidth from the idea, it shows at least that he had an inkling of the meaning of certain words.

Furness gives this conjecture short shrift, saying, rather disdainfully, "Are we to believe that the betossed soul of Leontes is here interested in a recondite physiological speculation?"

To a man who did not catch the passage as a whole, nor understand its bearing upon the play in general, this physiological interpretation of certain words must certainly have seemed ridiculous.

## THE CLEAREST GODS

*Edgar.* . . . therefore, thou happy father,  
Think that the clearest gods, who make them honours  
Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee.

(King Lear, iv, 6, 72)

THE meaning of "clearest" in this connection is a point which remains unconquered. Furness submits a list of the most notable conjectures since the time of Theobald and Samuel Johnson but does not venture to suggest that any of them may be right.

When Shakespeare is so extremely logical that he begins a statement with *therefore*, we may be warranted in saying that a little logical thought was expected to make the case plain.

The "clearest" gods are, and always have been, those that perform miracles. As man's conception of deity is liable to be vague, abstract and uncertain, the god that deals definitely with us by performing a miracle makes himself clearest to the mind. A miracle is in the nature of proof.

The trouble here is that critics do not grasp the one great thing which Shakespeare has done with Gloucester in the course of the play.

Gloucester, by being made to suffer to the limit of human endurance, and for no just reason that he can see, loses his faith in an over-

ruling providence. There is no divine caretaking; no higher power whose deeper wisdom we may depend upon. Nay worse:—

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods,  
They kill us for their sport.

This was Gloucester's view; and the best thing to do in such a world was to take your life in your own hands and die.

This is in Act 3. In Act 4 a great change has come over him; we hear him say:

You ever gentle gods, take my breath from me;  
Let not my worser spirit tempt me again  
To die before you please.

And a little later we see this same man standing under a tree, blind and helpless, with worse fortunes still piling in around him. But nothing can move him to impatience now; he is as passive as the tree itself.

What was it that made such a change in him? It was what he saw in a moment when this remark about "the clearest gods" was made to him. Right at that instant the great transformation in his soul was wrought, and by those few words. If we do not understand the cliff scene as leading up to the climax in these words we have missed a whole section of the play.

Edgar led his blind father to a place on the flat plain and made him believe he was standing on the very edge of Dover cliff. Then he pretended to go away, knowing that the aged and life-weary man would take the leap from

what he supposed to be an awful height. Edgar did this because the deep eye of love showed him what had happened to his father more serious than even the loss of his eyes. Gloucester had lost his faith. And the only way this could be at once restored was by a miracle. Accordingly, when Gloucester took the leap and fell flatlong, Edgar ran to him and in altered voice made him believe that he had really fallen from that dizzy height but had been made to come off without injury. The watchful gods had done it; they had interposed to save him by a miracle. From that moment to the end of the tragedy no suffering is too great for Gloucester patiently to endure. He had lost his bodily vision, but the eyesight of his soul had been restored. He believed; and the deep inner havoc was mended. There is not in all literature — there could not be — a scene so beautiful as this cliff episode when we understand it. The son, with deep insight of the state of affairs, contrives to heal his father's maimed soul. He has given him back his faith.

Nothing but a miracle could save a man who jumped off the edge of Dover cliff; and none but the gods can perform a miracle: —

*therefore, thou happy father*  
Think that the clearest gods, who make them honours  
Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee.

The watchful gods, in whom Gloucester had ceased to believe, are thus made clear to him.

And Edgar calls him "happy" because he feels that though worldly losses may not be righted, the man has been given something worth having.

The "*clearest gods*" are simply those gods "who make them honours of men's impossibilities," or in other words those who perform miracles for human edification. Shakespeare has defined the word himself; the two phrases are synonymous. This pronouncement is the climax of the whole episode; and, as I have repeatedly shown, Shakespeare is careful to define by reiteration the meanings that are of great import. In fact, a large proportion of these so-called cruxes, where typographical error is suspected, are simply climactic passages; and because they are the high points of an inner tragedy — of happenings to the mind and soul themselves — they involve a point of view. It is because they involve a point of view that Shakespeare expresses them, not in commonplace and worn phrases, but in words fundamentally selected to force the point of view upon us. A miracle, *fundamentally*, is to make god *clear* to those who do not believe. If we miss what is being said here we miss a whole important section of the play.

It will now be worth a few moments' time to observe a certain point of art in the handling of this whole episode. From the time Edgar takes his father's arm, at the end of Scene i, Act iv, and starts out for the cliff, we are not given the least hint of what his intentions are.

We see them arrive at a place on the plain; we watch with interest and possibly a smile as Edgar describes the locality in imaginary details; and finally we see him place the blind Gloucester on the supposed verge and formally leave him, calling back to prove that he has gone. All this time there is not the least mention of a miracle. Only at the last moment, when Gloucester is about to pray, and this trifling with his belief might excite the resentment of the audience, does Edgar give any hint that he has an object in all this. And then he merely says, in an aside to the audience: "Why I do trifle thus with his despair, is done to cure it" — but with no indication of what the nature of that cure is going to be. This is all held in the realm of curiosity and suspense so that the revelation may fall with the greater weight when it suddenly comes out. Neither the word *miracle*, nor the idea of it, is given us. The whole explanation of the scene and its deeper motives are made to rest on those two lines. It is important therefore that we should understand them.

I here append a few of the principal conjectures. Note how the critics try to arrive at meanings by mere verbal means.

THEOBALD: That is, open and righteous in their dealing. So in Timon, iv, iii, 27, "Ye clear heavens."

JOHNSON: The purest; the most free from evil.

CAPELL: It may have the sense of clear-sighted, given with some reference to the imposition on Gloucester, his weak belief of his bastard.

WHITE: The sense of the context, and the great similarity in manuscript between *cl* and *d*, make it more than possible that the correct reading here is *dearest*. Yet by such a change we should lose the fine opposition of "clearest" and "impossibilities."

SCHMIDT says that *bright*, *pure*, *glorious* are all contained in the word "clear."

Furness does not offer a solution.

## THE FAIRIES' RINGLETS

*Titania.* These are the forgeries of jealousy;  
And never since the middle summer's spring  
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,  
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,  
Or in the beached margent of the sea,  
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,  
But with thy brawls thou hast disturbed our sport.

(*Midsummer Night*, ii, 1, 86)

W. A. WRIGHT, in annotating this passage in the Cambridge edition, explained these "ringlets" as being the same as Titania's "orbs upon the green" which are mentioned a few lines before; that is, the little circles of grass known as fairy rings.

Furness, in getting out the *Variorum*, found a considerable difficulty with Wright's note. Ringlets of grass do not grow upon the beached margent of the sea. As the only way out of the difficulty he decided that the fairies danced upon the sandy beach for the sake of letting the wind blow through their hair.

It is easy enough to pronounce this view ridiculous — which it certainly must be to anyone with a literary sense of humor — but it must be remembered that the objection is perfectly valid. Shakespeare was so painstaking in every line and had such vivid conceptions of everything he wrote that it is

impossible to conceive him as speaking of rings of grass on the blank “margent” of the sea. As Furness says, “The fairy rings ‘whereof the ewe not bites’ are found where the grass grows green in pastures, but not by the paved fountain nor by rushy brook, and never in the beached margent of the sea, on those yellow sands where of all places, from Shakespeare’s day to this, fairies foot it featly and toss their gossamer *ringlets* to the whistling and the music of the wind.”

How are we to straighten out this profound question?

We have got to start by remarking that Wright and Furness are both wrong: these “ringlets” are neither circles of grass nor ringlets of hair.

The orbs or circles of grass in the meadow are the *result* of the fairies’ having danced there. They are not pre-existent circles of grass which the fairies dance round. Shakespeare evidently had a perfect understanding of this:—

you demi-puppets that  
By moonshine do the green sour ringlets *make*  
Whereof the ewe not bites.—*Tempest*, v, 1, 37.

Fairies dance in circles; they have an all-hands-round way of disporting themselves in their moonlight revels; and in their footsteps spring up these circles of grass in the pasture. Now, inasmuch as fairies can dance wherever they please, whether in the pasture or by the rushy brook or in the beached margent of the

sea, it is evident they are going to do so; and if the soil does not happen to be fertile enough to bring up grass in their footsteps, what care they? The point is that these "ringlets" are simply the circles in which they danced. We are here supposed to get a live picture of the little people themselves. If a large circle is a ring a little circle is a ringlet; and the diminutive gives an impression of the smallness of the fairies.

## STILL-PEERING AIR

O you leaden messengers,  
That ride upon the violent speed of fire,  
Fly with false aim; move the still-peering air  
That sings with piercing.

(All's Well, iii, 2, 113)

"Still-peering, adj. a doubtful word." (Globe glossary)

"Still-peering, that seems to be motionless? A doubtful word." (Neilson, 1906)

"Still-peering air; so Folio 1; Folio 2, 'still-piercing'; probably an error for still-piecing; i.e. still-closing."

(Gollancz)

CONJECTURE on this famous difficulty began with Warburton and his contemporaries, but as none of the many suggestions have proved self-evident or plausible it is now considered a hopeless crux. During the past century Steevens' "still-piecing" has been most favored while still remaining a mere conjecture. That "still" means always or ever, according to Shakespeare's usage, is generally recognized; the perplexity is in regard to *peering*.

"Peering" as here used is a verb form of the noun *peer*, meaning an equal. In war (the present connection) a man's peer would be one whom he could not overcome. "Still-peering air" means that the air, despite the

leaden missiles that pierce it, is ever unconquered, always unvanquished — invulnerable.

If we have any familiarity with Shakespeare we must soon learn that he had certain poetic conceptions which his mind kept in stock, as it were, and which he made repeated use of. Ariel says to the shipwrecked noblemen:

Wound the loud winds or with bemocked-at stabs  
Kill the still-closing waters.

In "Hamlet," Marcellus says:

For it is, as the air, invulnerable,  
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Again, in the same play:

his poisoned shot may miss our name  
And hit the woundless air.

In "Macbeth" we have:

As easy may'st thou the intrenchant air  
With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed.

In the "Tempest" this invulnerability of the air is given a humorous turn:

So full of valor that they smote the air.

The above is sufficient to show us that the *idea* which my interpretation would observe is one — in fact it is *the* one — which would be natural to Shakespeare's mind. But now remains the whole question: *Is* this what he means *here*? Would Shakespeare take the noun *peer*, look at it from the standpoint of war as being one who could not be vanquished,

and then use it in the verb form? To this we must reply that it is utterly Shakespearean.

In the beginning of "The Merchant of Venice" we have a description of Antonio's merchant fleets, which

Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood  
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,  
That curtsey to them, do them reverence.

Note the connection in order to get the exact sense of "overpeer." Signiors and rich burghers, which the ships are like, are superior citizens, they are like peers of the realm, in which sense they overpeer the inferior citizens who curtsey to them.

In "Cymbeline" the two princes are described. We learn that even though their position and birth were entirely laid aside, the greatest men

Could not outpeer these twain.

In both these cases we have the noun *peer* used in verb form. And so, if a man who peers another equals him, and one who out-peers or overpeers another more than equals him, we may say that they are peering or outpeering or overpeering in the sense of exercising equality or superiority. And so "still-peering" air regards the atmosphere as always and ever the equal of these leaden missiles of war — inconquerable, invulnerable.

We see therefore that the line expresses an idea that fits the general connection and from

a point of view which was native to Shakespeare's mind; and it does it in words which are according to his usage in other places. With this explanation the passage should be as open to sense as any the commonest and plainest English that Shakespeare ever wrote.

## THE NATURE OF CAPITAL

*Captain.* Truly to speak, and with no addition,  
We go to gain a little patch of ground  
That hath in it no profit but the name.  
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it.

(Hamlet, iv, 4, 20)

THE usual explanation of this line is that the second “five” is a mere repetition for the sake of emphasis. Editors generally, past and present, punctuate according to this interpretation.]

But this is not the meaning. Shakespeare is here striking deeper into the nature of things. It is the very nature of money to have other money owing to it; first, the original amount invested, and then something over. When you take five ducats and put it into some enterprise, your capital has the same amount owing to it plus a profit. Your five ducats stand in your accounts as a sum of money to which an equal amount is *owing* on its *own* behalf together with something over for *yourself*. Therefore to make an investment with no result but to pay five ducats five would be the *reductio absurdum* of investment; it would be simply to take pains without profit. This then is what the line means and the way it should be printed — *to pay five ducats five.*

The Captain is not only saying this but he is rating the land still lower; he would not even expect to come out of the transaction by paying his five ducats their five; in other words the land would be farmed at a loss. It might very well have been said in just those words; but Shakespeare, as usual, not merely says it but does it in such a way as to strike into the very nature and philosophy of the thing.

The generally accepted interpretation not only misses this but has the Captain say the wrong thing and do it very awkwardly. He is supposed to be saying that he would not undertake to farm it to make a total profit of five ducats; and to be repeating the five simply to impress that amount on Hamlet's mind. Hence the present way of punctuating. But this is to miss the whole sense and spirit of the line.

The line should be printed without the commas before and after *five*; it is a straight-away English sentence which drives directly at its meaning. Shakespeare does not indulge in such weak emphasis nor halt and boggle a line over a point so futile and insignificant.

## THE CHESS PLAYERS

*The entrance of the cell opens, and discovers Ferdinand and Miranda playing at chess.*

*Mira.* Sweet lord, you play me false.

*Ferd.* No, my dear'st love.

I would not for the world.

*Mira.* Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle,  
And I would call it fair play.

(*The Tempest* V, 1, 170)

CLOSE thought upon the possible significance of Miranda's remark has only led critics and editors deeper into the darkness of an unsolvable passage. The words usually selected for textual notes are, "you should wrangle." Speculation is divided as to whether she is saying that he *ought to* wrangle and she would call it fair play, or whether she means that *if he did* wrangle she would call it fair play; and there is indecision as to what she means, exactly, by wrangle. Hudson says, "The sense evidently wanted here is, 'you *might play me false*'; but how to get this out of *wrangle*, is not very apparent." He then takes up a theory that as wrangle is derived from *wrong*, and the north of England has the expression *wrangously* for wrongfully, the word wrangle in this passage is "an explanatory parallelism of Miranda's 'play me false' and means *wrong me*, — cheat me at the game."

Johnson, as cited by Furness, says: "I take the sense to be only this; Ferdinand would not, he says, play her false for the *world*; yes, answers she, I would allow you to do it for something less than the world, for *twenty kingdoms*, and I wish you well enough to allow you, after a little wrangle, that your play was fair." Furness pointed out the inconsistency of this:—"It is not at once manifest whether 'score' here is *account*, *game* or the number *twenty*, but in either case, I think, we should expect that Miranda, in order to show her boundless faith and love, would exaggerate Ferdinand's vaunt and not diminish it as she does, according to Mr. Smith and Dr. Johnson."

While this shows the unsatisfactoriness of taking the passage in such a sense, Mr. Furness did not offer a solution.

As a matter of fact, the trouble here is not one of this word or that, for they are all perfectly familiar, nor of a particular phrase nor yet any doubtful grammatical construction. What is wanted is an insight of the spirit in which the lovers are speaking throughout. If we ask what Miranda means in this remark, why do we not go further and inquire what she means by saying "Sweet lord, you play me false." Was Ferdinand cheating? If so, what sort of ideal lover is he, and how has his character changed so utterly of a sudden? If

he was *not* playing her false, what does she mean by saying he is? Is she just doing this for the pleasure of hearing him deny it and declare his devotion? If she was so politic a coquette here she is certainly not the utterly sincere and frank Miranda we have learned to take pleasure in.

The question should be: What does this whole scene mean? Why did Shakespeare write it at all? What was his object? The solution consists in pointing out the whole dramatic scheme of the author when he invented the scene.

When Shakespeare sat down to write this he had come to the fifth act of "The Tempest"; and almost the end of the act. The characters have all gone through their strange experience; deep lessons have been taught, past wrongs retributed and the fond lover tried; the magic wand has been discarded and Ariel is all done except for a slight remaining service. It is really the end of the play with only a formal conclusion to be observed.

At this point, Shakespeare wished to give us a final glimpse of the happy lovers; and he wanted to do it in some short climactic way which would give us the deepest and most delighted insight of perfect unselfish love. How would he contrive to do it? With only blank paper before him, and in his usual mood of close scrutiny into human nature, he sat and thought it over. When he was through

he had done it in five lines; and here is what the audience saw:

The entrance to the cave or cell being uncovered, Miranda and Ferdinand were seen within at a game of chess. Pawns, knights, castles, bishops in their respective colors were prominent on the board; and (what an audience would take account of at once) they were mostly in Miranda's possession. Miranda was winning. And now we hear her say:

Sweet lord, you play me false.

In other words, Ferdinand was deliberately giving the game away to her.

He answers:

No, my dearest love,  
I would not for the world.

As a matter of fact he was not playing her false. So utter is his unselfishness toward her, so far removed from his mind is any thought but that of giving where she is concerned, that he has actually been helping her to win and taking pleasure every time a move was in her favor.

But a game is of such a nature that it will not go on under such conditions — it will not be a game. A game is in the nature of a contest, and there must at least be a mimic desire to gain the victory and leave the other person the loser. Miranda, knowing by the promptings of her own soul what the difficulty is, sees that he must, in order to be desirous

of winning, stir his mind with a lively imagination of tremendous stakes. And so she stirs him up:

Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle,—

And then she adds (tell-tale words that show us she is just as pleased to lose to him as he is to her) —

And I would call it fair play.

By *wrangle*, she means contest by every means in his power, and whatever means he took to win she would call it fair. In short, these two cannot really play a game; their thoughts are all of love, and it consists only of unselfishness and joy in the other's success. They have only been playing because each thought it would give pleasure to the other.

In no way I can think of would it be possible to put such unique and telling emphasis, in short, upon the thing Shakespeare wished to show. The fundamental psychology of a game is love of a contest, victory and gain. To this engaged couple, in the first new joy of self-abnegating love, all this is just the opposite; and it is no wonder that the game was all going contrary to what it ought and that Miranda had to suggest tremendously big measures to make it be a real game. Its dramatic merit consists in the fact that it would deliver its message instantly and thoroughly in an unique and interesting way.

It would amuse the audience. And the location of all the paraphernalia of victory, in connection with her opening remark, would make any profound interpretation unnecessary to the Elizabethan audience.

## CLEOPATRA'S ANSWER

*Cleo.* Be it known, that we, the greatest, are misthought  
For things that others do; and, when we fall,  
We answer others' merits in our name,  
*(we)* Are therefore to be pitied.

(Antony and Cleopatra v, 2, 176)

THESE words, in the last scene of the last act of the play, are Cleopatra's final declaration to Cæsar. After this we see her but for a short space with the clown and her ladies; and then her death.

As will be seen, the passage does not make complete sense. As we gather its meaning, the sentence refuses to carry itself farther than the word *name*, after which there is a detached remainder of words which we scarcely know what to do with. The only way to get around the difficulty is to assume that *We* is to be understood before the last line. This is the basis upon which it is accepted in the most scholarly modern editions. The above punctuation is that of the Globe.

Accepting it upon this basis, we see that the last line is a sentence by itself; a full stop is to be understood after *name*. Neilson (1906), in order to make the punctuation fit the approved interpretation of the sense, approximates the period by using a semi-colon; usually

the difficulty is slubbered over with a comma in order to rest upon the authority of the First Folio.

Turning now our attention to the sense, we see in Cleopatra's first statement that persons in high positions are blamed for misdeeds and errors committed by those under them. This is plain; but upon reading farther what does the word *merits* mean here? Does it mean those same misdeeds and errors? — or to stick more strictly to the text, do "merits" in the underlings mean these things which make a queen misthought? Commentators, including Furness, accept it in that sense. In no other way can they carry a connected meaning as far as the understood "We."

Another source of dissatisfaction, to me, is that if this is the meaning of the passage as a whole, then the words "others' merits in our name" are superfluous. As much would have been said without them; and as we know, Shakespeare usually makes progress in every word with a giant's stride. Was he so redundant here? I also find that he never uses *merits* in that derogatory sense in the whole course of his work.

The whole trouble here is an incomplete perception of what Cleopatra is saying. We should put a period after *answer*; then the passage will fit her meaning — aside from the great improvement in the dramatic poetry from the standpoint of vocal rendition.

Just previous to this passage, an incident has occurred by which the captive Queen, now reduced to the rank of mere woman, has been greatly humiliated. She has just handed over to Cæsar the list of her jewels and other wealth, declaring, at the same time, that she has reserved nothing of any considerable value. And, to impress upon him the truth of her statement, she refers him to her treasurer, Seleucas.

But Seleucas! This man, who owes her loyalty and gratitude, lets it be known in a few words that what she has said is not true at all. She has reserved fully half her wealth — plate and jewels. Cleopatra has told a fib. To make it worse she has been caught in it by the very means she had taken to make it valid — hence the blush. But does she weakly succumb to this mischance or acknowledge herself caught? Not at all. Having vented the anger of a wronged queen upon her unworthy subject, and told Cæsar with charming assumption of her high station that these valuable things were but “lady trifles,” she makes that final declaration which begins so strikingly:

Be it known, that we, the greatest, are misthought  
For things that others do; and when we fall  
We answer.

This general statement resounds like a royal proclamation: *Be it known.* The great are misjudged all their lives. Having made this statement she proceeds with the logical corollary. Seleucas had betrayed his fallen queen

because he hoped to recommend himself to Cæsar. He saw himself out of office, and, looking for new preferment, he thought that this truth-telling would seem a *merit* in Cæsar's eyes.

Others' *merits* in our name  
Are therefore to be pitied.

It is well argued. If we great ones have to answer for all the misdeeds of others, it is a shame and a pity that, when we have fallen, they should assume merits at our expense. That is to say, at the expense of her good name; hence "in our name."

Furness understands Cleopatra's conclusion to mean that "from the eminence of our position, therefore, we are to be pitied." But Cleopatra is talking about something more than simply that. The present condition of these lines is due to a failure to see that she has any reference to Seleucus. She is dealing with the case in hand.

## LORD BARDOLPH'S REPLY

*L. Bardolph.* Yes, if this present quality of war  
Needed the instant action. A cause on foot  
Lives so in hope as in an early spring  
We see the appearing buds, which to prove fruit  
Hope gives not so much warrant as despair  
That frosts will bite them.

(Neilson's ed. 1906)

*L. Bard.* Yes, if this present quality of war,  
Indeed the instant action: a cause on foot  
Lives so in hope (*etc.*).

(Globe ed. and Cambridge)

*L. Bard.* Yes, in this present quality of war;  
Indeed the instant action — a cause on foot —  
Lives so in hope (*etc.*).

(Malone, White, Gollancz, etc.)

*L. Bard.* Yes, if this present quality of warre,  
Indeed the instant action: a cause on foot,  
Liues so in hope (*etc.*).

(First Folio, 1623)

LET the reader note first where the full stop (period or colon) comes. Neilson and the Globe have it after *action*; a large number of other editors have it after *war*; the First Folio has it after *action*. Note next the changes that have been made in wording and compare them with the First Folio. Where the Folio has *indeed* Neilson has *needed*. Again, where the original text has *if*, Malone, White and others have *in*. Here we have a view of the struggles with this passage from the early edi-

tors up to the present day; and the comparatively recent Globe edition, which was thought to be the final word in Shakespearean scholarship, is so unsatisfactory that the latest scholarly edition (1906) cannot accept it as making satisfactory sense. And yet, this present-day reading is only had by substituting *needed*, a word for which there is no authority except editorial conjecture; all of which must leave us in an unsatisfactory state of mind as to what we are to understand here.

I hope the reader has begun to gather that in solving these "cruxes" I am not depending upon verbal quibbles or mere antiquarian conjecture. The editorial and critical mind has most often failed by its inability to follow *character* as Shakespeare, by carefully laid plot and circumstance, brings it to our attention. In explaining cruxes by a knowledge of plot and character, therefore, we are not devoting our time to a mere word or line; we are, in a most important way, throwing light upon the whole work.

Let me invite the reader to go back a few lines and see how interestingly Shakespeare reveals character in this play. The present lines come in the course of a warm argument between three men who are debating the advisability of leading their troops into battle. There is a fourth also — Mowbray — who is the sort of officer who says nothing, but listens till the matter is decided and at once becomes a man

of action. These four, the Archbishop, Hastings, Mowbray and Bardolph are in command of the rebel forces. But they have been disappointed by the failure of Northumberland to unite himself with them; and now they are arguing as to whether they should engage in battle with the king or not. These four men are of different and strongly contrasted types of character. Shakespeare knew that a thing is best defined by comparison and the noting of differences; he therefore throws groups of contrasting characters together; and this arrangement upon his part serves to throw their various characteristics into high relief.

Hastings is a type of man with whom we are all familiar. He is too sanguine. Once he has started upon an undertaking his hopes completely take the place of his judgment; he deludes himself with the sort of optimism which will not look plain facts in the face. When circumstances arise which should give him pause, he meets the facts by deluding himself still further; he cannot admit to his mind anything which conflicts with his fond hopes. Cool judgment is not a part of his makeup; he is one of the kind who rush forth to disaster and only see it afterward. He is for going into battle at once.

Lord Bardolph is the very opposite; he has no patience with that visionary, childish spirit in a military officer. With him war is cool business; and first of all he wants to know the

facts. Thus he will decide whether to delay for reinforcements, or to lead a forlorn hope, or to give over the undertaking entirely. He acts upon judgment, and judgment must deal with facts; he wishes to have them all before him whether they are favorable to his hopes or not. Hastings is hasty; he would never do to plan a battle or conduct a campaign. But Lord Bardolph is a typical commanding General. He does not hesitate nor yet rush ahead; he has the force of mind to look at facts and insist that they be taken into consideration.

The Archbishop is entirely different; he is not a soldier at all. His nature is diplomatic, his training is that of the scholar, academic and polemic. While the others contrast with each other as soldiers, the Archbishop is thrown into definite relief by putting him into a position where he had no business in the first place—at the head of troops. Not being a practical soldier he cannot take the initiative in pointing the way to a decision; he wishes to hear the various views of the others. But while he is no military man he does not therefore abstain from having opinions, one side and then the other, but quite the opposite. Being a man of polemic training, he says much as the argument develops the facts to work on; he feels his way and inclines first to a point of Lord Bardolph's and then to the more hopeful view as Hastings insists upon it. And finally, as there is complete disagreement between Bar-

dolph and Hastings, it is the man of the church who really decides to risk the encounter.

Such is the internal nature of the scene; it is a study in character. But in the meantime the plot is being advanced; and its effect as a *whole*, in relation to the plot, is to leave us with a deep impression of the ticklish situation of the rebel cause. Here we have Mowbray, who, though he is Lord Marshal, says practically nothing. The Archbishop, who formally opens the conference, naturally directs his attention to the Lord Marshal first; but *he* simply defers to the opinions of the others and is heard from no more till, at the end, he says, "Shall we draw our numbers and set on?" — a question. This, and the fact that the churchman virtually decides the military question, in the lack of agreement, show us the rebel plight. Having now considered the substance of the scene in detail, and seen its general function as a unit in the plot, we may note how deftly Shakespeare does all this. The solution of the crux will present itself when we see that it is engaged upon the point of character presented by the two opposite men, Bardolph and Hastings.

Opening the argument, Mowbray makes inquiry as to their present numbers and the prospect of reinforcement. To this Hastings offers the answer.

:-

*Hast.* Our present numbers grow upon the file  
To five and twenty thousand men of choice;  
And our supplies live largely in the hope

Of great Northumberland, whose bosom burns  
With an incensed fire of injuries.

Note the nature of Hastings' answer; they are five and twenty men "of choice." The number of men alone is not good enough for him; he must raise their value by looking at them as being more than ordinary men. And though Northumberland has so far disappointed them by not arriving, Hastings is careful to add that Northumberland's "bosom burns" with the fire of injuries received from the king their foe.

The character of Lord Bardolph at once asserts itself. He throws aside these mere hopeful expectations and sanguine points of view and brings it down to a matter of facts and figures as they actually stand here and now.

*L. Bardolph.* The question then, Lord Hastings, standeth thus;

Whether our present five and twenty thousand  
May hold up head without Northumberland.

He is interested in what they may expect with their *present* five and twenty thousand (note this point of view). And in what they may do *without* the man who has, so far, not arrived, and who may therefore have gone back on them. He is not one to rely upon what may be in the "bosom" of any man; he wants performance and not promises. He wants to see the soldiers. He has virtually restated the question that Mowbray asked, seeing that Hastings is the kind to drift away from a plain

question of present facts. Hastings, in reply to this question as to whether they may hope to succeed *without* Northumberland, replies:

*Hast.* With him we may.

Hastings is not the kind of man who would ever answer, *Without* him we may *not*. He shuts his eyes to facts. He is a man who will *not* get down to actual facts in present circumstances. Shakespeare is here bringing his character before us with stronger emphasis. At first he only indicated it in the deftest way,— by having him speak of his men as “men of choice.” We may expect to see this emphasis grow stronger, for Shakespeare is particular to make his points tacit.

Hastings’ plain answer should have been *No*. Bardolph again brings him back to the case in hand.

*Bardolph.* Yea, marry, there’s the point.  
But if without him we be thought too feeble,  
My judgement is, we should not step too far  
Till we have had his assistance by the hand;  
For in a theme so bloody-faced as this  
Conjecture, expectation and surmise  
Of aids uncertain should not be admitted.

There is a touch of sarcasm in the, “Yea, marry, there’s the point!” It is the point which Hastings will not answer. His mind is one that cannot be made to get down to actual present facts. Bardolph speaks of using “judgement” as opposed to “conjecture, expectation and surmise.” The Archbishop, seeing the force of this, agrees with Bardolph:—

*Archbishop.* 'Tis very true, Lord Bardolph; for indeed  
It was young Hotspur's case at Shrewsbury.

Bardolph, now that the scholarly Archbishop has mentioned a precedent, put Hotspur's case in very strong terms — a biting reflection on Hastings himself.

*Bardolph.* It was, my lord; who lined himself with hope,  
Eating the air on promise of supply,  
Flattering himself in project of a power  
Much smaller than the smallest of his thoughts:  
And so, with great imagination  
Proper to madmen, led his powers to death  
And winking leap'd into destruction.

And now Hastings, seeing the rest against him, and feeling the sting of this way of putting things, replies weakly —

*Hastings.* But, by your leave, it never yet did hurt  
To lay down likelihods and forms of hope.

This brings us to the "crux." It consists in Bardolph's emphatic reply to this view which Hastings *will* persist in.

Bardolph, disgusted, becomes somewhat sarcastic. He intimates that if their present outlook is so much a matter of *hope* — as Hastings' unwillingness to look at facts would indicate — then their plans are like a bud upon a tree in an early spring — more likely to be frost-bitten than ever to come to fruit. But before he gives this touch of sarcasm, he denies Hastings statement directly: *Yes, it does hurt.*

If there is anything calculated to try Bardolph's patience it is this, "It *never yet* did

hurt." "Never yet" means in other cases heretofore, in general. Hastings seems utterly unable to get down to this actual case of theirs and take account of *present* facts. The *never yet* means nothing; it is simply a weak way of insisting without reason. And Bardolph, in replying, refuses to be led off into such general instances but insists still more strongly — repeatedly — upon sticking to the subject. He says: *Yes, it does* hurt, if this business in hand right here and now, this particular quality of war — rebellion, this instant action we are engaged in, this cause actually on foot, lives so in hope, then it *does* hurt to indulge in vague surmises and delude our minds with "forms of hope." Or to put it in the words of the text:

*L. Bard.* Yes, if this present quality of war,  
Indeed the instant action, a cause on foot,  
Lives so in hope as in an early spring  
We see th' appearing buds, which, to prove fruit  
Hope give not so much warrant as despair  
That frosts will bite them.

These are the very words of the First Folio, the original text of this particular passage. All editors have had to change words, some this word and some that, in the effort to twist it into some statement other than it is. But could there be a plainer, more specific reply, or one which better fits the case and hangs grammatically together with closer sense? It is all a case of following the argument and

having a feeling for the play of character which Shakespeare takes so much pains to unfold to us.

These phrases, "this present quality of war," and "the instant action," and "a cause on foot" are synonymous; and the repetition in different forms is simply Bardolph's way of insisting, of drilling into Hastings' head, that we must deal with the thing before us here and now. After "Yes" the words *it does hurt* are to be understood. For in giving a direct answer, yes or no, the query is included in the sense. If the reader will put these words after "Yes" the first time he reads the passage for himself, the grammatical structure of the sentence will become so plain that the length of it cannot possibly entangle him. Hastings has said, "It never yet did hurt," and when a man replies *Yes* to this he means of course, "Yes, *it does* hurt." The shorter form makes Bardolph's reply more incisive, curt and direct, in keeping with the spirit of the moment.

If the reader will now examine the various texts at the head of this explanation he will see that their statements are impossible.

Neilson's preference, in some regards, is the best. But he has changed "indeed" to "needed," which is unnecessary and has no authority. His putting a period after *action* makes a separate statement of what follows: "A cause on foot lives so in hope," etc. This would refer to *all* causes, or wars, on foot, and

this will not bear examination; for many wars actually on foot are very certain in their outcome and do not stand so entirely “in hope” as is here stated.

The Globe text is the worst, for it has not even the merit of showing that the editors had a notion of what they meant themselves — which the other renderings, to a certain extent, do.

In point of punctuation, that of Malone, which has been much followed, is the best because it shows these three phrases as being synonymous and parallel. But the change to *in* where the Folio has *if*, is fatal. It makes Bardolph say, “Yes; *in* this present quality of war lives so *in* hope,” which is not even English and could not convey any idea. The reason of all this is simply that the editors have not had the idea themselves; and in editing the text they had to make some effort. The passage has never been correctly printed. The careless punctuation of the First Folio mixed up the sense, and since then it has gone from bad to worse because of the efforts to make something out of it by changing the *words*. The printers of the First Folio could not punctuate; for in order to punctuate you must understand the sense. In cases where they did not follow the drift of things they threw in colons or commas at random. The First Folio is the worst edited work of any great importance that the world has ever seen; the palpable errors run

up into many thousands. The original text, reproduced exactly, is as follows:—

*L. Bar.* Yes, if this present quality of warre  
Indeed the instant action: a cause on foot,  
Lives so in hope: As in an early Spring,  
We see th' appearing buds, *etc.*

But, as punctuation is a mere matter of following the sense, and as Shakespeare's sense is so tacit because of the close interrelations and organic cogency of his work, it is an easy matter to remedy the random commas and colons. And when this method makes the most convincing and luminous sense it is a satisfaction to know that we at least have the *words* that Shakespeare wrote.

## THE HUMAN MIND

*Duke S.* Dost thou believe, Orlando, that the boy  
Can do all this that he hath promised?

*Orlando.* I sometimes do believe, and sometimes do not;  
As those that fear they hope, and know they fear.

(*As You Like It*, v, 4, 4)

THE words of this last line have been changed in every conceivable way in the effort to get a meaning out of it. Close study over the possible idea began with Bishop Warburton and Samuel Johnson, since when dozens of editors and critics have offered emendations on the theory that the difficulty is due to typographical error. As none of these conjectures have proved self-evident, the Globe marks it as a crux. It is still suspected of being a "corrupt line."

The words are correct as they stand. The line deals with the faculty of apperception; and Shakespeare is applying this peculiar ability of the mind to the most embarrassing problem with which it can deal — the struggle between hope and reason. It could not possibly be expressed more exactly than in the above words.

Shakespeare is here dealing with a man whose mind is under the influence of the most passionate hope a man may have — that of

love. The fulfillment of his hope is made to rest on the slightest of all forms of evidence, a promise. The promise in this case is not made by the other person involved, but by a mere boy who has no apparent ability to bring it to pass; the boy's promise is beyond all reason. Thus we have an inward contest of the strongest kind — the contest between hope, which is always inclined to believe without evidence, and reason, which does not believe except with evidence. The man tries to make up his mind, and, as this is impossible, the mind's attention is turned toward itself and is driven to an attempt at self-analysis — apperception.

Orlando is deeply in love with a nobleman's daughter. He has not courted her, has not even mentioned his love to her, and he is away off in the forest where she, it would seem, could not possibly be. Along comes a boy who most emphatically promises that he will bring the young woman in a short while and that she will at once marry him.

The human mind, with its embarrassing apperceptive faculty, could hardly be put in a more distressing plight than such an inward struggle — the contest between hope and reason over so important and so insistent a thing as love. A man cannot stop thinking about it and yet he can never come to any reasonable conclusion.

We only hope in a case of doubt. Doubt arises from a lack of evidence. To believe

without evidence is not reason but delusion; therefore hope is more or less self-delusion. And the human mind is so constituted that it is aware of its weakness for self-delusion. Right here it is possible to get into a most perplexing difficulty with ourselves.

What takes place is as follows. Orlando's mind goes willingly to the belief of that which he so ardently desires. This is natural; he finds himself believing it. But it occurs to him that he is being led into belief by mere hope and against all reason. Maybe it is just delusion on his part. At the same time the thing may actually come to pass, in which case it is a fact and nothing else; but this he cannot know though he would like to. He is therefore *afraid* that it is only *hope* on his part; or, in other words, he fears he hopes. And to fear that you only hope is to go over to doubt completely.

But this is an unwelcome state of mind to him; the doubt gives him pain because it is so much against his desires. And he is in the greatest anxiety, the utmost stress of mind, regarding the truth of the matter. He has been correcting his mind against delusion, and now it occurs to him that the mind may be overfearful of delusion and exaggerate its own case. As he is conscious of his own extreme anxiety, he sees that the mind, working in such stress and completely in the dark, may correct itself too much. Being awake to this,

he *knows* he *fears*; and in this knowledge that the mind may be influenced as much by fear of delusion as by hope of fulfillment, the recent verdict of reason is discountenanced and hope gains the ascendancy again. Therefore he believes.

We here see depicted the alternation between the emotions, which are unstable in their nature, and the intellect, which attempts to hold its own at every relapse.

Doubt is repugnant to the human mind, especially in a case where one's whole happiness is involved. Orlando found his opinion changing back and forth a great many times: thus his mind's attention was called to itself. The alternation is that between doubt and hope—between being afraid that you are only hoping and knowing that the mind may be too much influenced by this fear. Orlando's problem as to whether the boy could do what he promised had to be fought out on the battleground of reason, for he could not tolerate doubt in a thing so vital to his interests; but there was no evidence to prove what he wished nor yet any positive proof that what the boy said was not so. Having believed because he hoped, and disbelieved because he saw it was unreasonable to believe without evidence, he had to do it all over again; for the human mind cannot really believe without evidence nor yet utterly disbelieve what it ardently desires. And in so important a question as that of love it cannot

stop thinking; therefore he had to keep on believing and disbelieving.

What Shakespeare has said in this line is exactly what takes place in the mind of any man under great stress of doubt; it could not be more fundamentally put in short. All men “fear they hope”—are afraid that they are only hoping. And what is this but to doubt the workings of the mind itself, for it is the mind which does the hoping and then does the fearing. In this case all men, being self-conscious, “know they fear.” If then we are thinkers at all, like Orlando, this fact that the mind fears or has an instinct against self-delusion, will prompt him to think that it may be carrying its apprehensiveness too far. And this will give more credence to the whisperings of hope again—a welcome state of mind but one which will not last long because reason will not have it. In a case of great importance to ourselves we cannot brook doubt; we have got to believe or disbelieve; and if there is no evidence to work on there is nothing to do but to go round the everlasting treadmill of hope and doubt, first one and then the other. I do not see how Shakespeare could have put this universal truth more plainly.

Why is it all put from the standpoint of “those who”? Because Shakespeare meant it as an universal truth. The “those” referred to is all of us. Then, too, it is a stroke of human nature to have Orlando put it in that way.

When we are engaged in self-analysis, the mind stands off to one side, as it were, and contemplates itself; but while it is doing so it considers itself as being engaged upon the great *subject* of mind. As a matter of fact we are simply considering ourselves, but being wrapped in the idea of contemplating mental law and general truth it is not natural for us to keep to the point of view that we are just considering ourselves in person. It is a mood of abstraction, of intense absence from ourselves. The metaphysician who writes about Mind so abstractly knows nothing upon the subject except what he learned by looking into his own; but he always refers to humanity in general and speaks in terms that are equivalent to Orlando's "those who." This is one of those quick touches of insight, of truth to nature, with which Shakespeare is always surprising us.

The reason this passage has been an inconquerable puzzle is simply that it has to do with one's self. Commentators are always looking into old books or speculating far afield as if they did not know that Shakespeare is always engaged simply upon human nature — a thing that is to be found near at home. And this seems to have been too near for the learned type of past generations who really raised all the confusion by their conjectures. It is almost humorous to consider the profound Samuel Johnson and the erudite Bishop Warburton, whose specialty was metaphysics, look-

ing in vain at a few words which simply described their own minds. It goes to show that “appereception” and such learned dialect in general may be a mere system of words, and acquired as such without ever taking the form of actual vital knowledge. Here was where Shakespeare excelled — in thinking fundamentally and having his knowledge at first hand.

In case the reader might be interested in the history of this line I here append a list of emendations.

WARBURTON — As those that fear their hap and know their fear.

JOHNSON — As those that fear, thy hope, and know thy fear. As those that fear with hope and hope with fear. As those that fear, thy hope, and now thy fear.

HEATH — As those that fear their hope, and know their fear. (Adopted by Capell.)

BLACKSTONE — As those that feign thy hope, and know thy fear.

MUSGRAVE — As those that fear, then hope; and know, then fear.

MASON — As those that fearing hope, and hoping fear.

RANN — As those that fear thee, hope, and know thee, fear.

BECKET — As those that hope thy fear, then know thy fear.

JACKSON — As those that fear the hope and know the fear.

HARNESS — As those that fear may hope, and know they fear.

COLLIER MSS. — As those that fear to hope and know thy fear.

JERVIS — As those fear that they hope, and know they fear.

BULLOCH — As those that scarcely hope and now they fear.

LETTSON — As those that fear their hope, and hope their fear.

(Adopted by Keightly, 1864.)

BAILEY — As those that fain would hope, and know they fear.

GOULD — As those fear that they hope, and hope they fear.

THE GLOBE EDITORS (ed. of 1895) — the line is given up and queried as hopelessly corrupt.

Of these conjectures, the one adopted by Capell would seem at first to embody the sense with fair clearness. But the change of *they* to *their* makes a fundamental difference in Orlando's state of mind. Orlando did not merely fear his hope; he feared that he did hope. He did not know about it, and was thus in a state of confusion. Besides which, Shakespeare's statement is that Orlando (true to nature) was clinging to the view that, after all, the thing might turn out in the end to be true, in which case his belief would prove to be no delusion at all but the belief of a fact. Thus the original passage shows that Orlando was in doubt about his own mind as well as the facts. Shakespeare's way of saying it is exact; and if an editor felt the necessity of altering the words it shows that he was laboring under some misconception.

## PAINTED HOPE

This minion stood upon her chastity,  
Upon her nuptial vow, her loyalty,  
And with that painted hope braves your mightiness.

(*Titus Andronicus*, ii, 3, 126)

AFTER studying all the emendations and conjectures from the time of the earliest critics, White gave up this passage with the note:— “A line manifestly, and it would seem hopelessly, corrupt. But perhaps we might read, And with that faint hope braves, &c.” The Globe editors mark the line containing *painted hope* with the obolus.

The speaker is the brutish Demetrius who is the son of the no less bestial Queen Tamora. The chaste Lavinia has repelled his advances. This “painted hope” contains a point of view which exactly fits the character and the circumstances.

If Lavinia, when he made his advances, had given him strictly to understand that she hated him; if she had met him with a tongue-lashing in good round unfeminine terms, she would have done something to dissipate that dream of lust and disenchant his passion. If she had conducted herself like a virago and put her refusal in terms of hate, she would have

been doing something that a man like himself could understand. And it would have operated somewhat to disillusionize him.

But the gentle Lavinia based her refusal upon her nuptial vows, her chastity, her loyalty to another. Not her mere personal value nor her hatred of him, but in terms that are born of her ideals, her goodness. Nothing could give more promise to such a man. For strange as it may seem when we think of it, lust at its lowest devours nothing with such relish as goodness (a point we see illustrated in *Measure for Measure*); and as nuptial vows and loyalty mean so little to him that they would seem to be easily set aside, her mention of no other reason for refusing seemed as good as a promise. With this understanding we may appreciate Shakespeare's way of saying it.

There are three stages of possession, or three degrees of concreteness — a mental vision, a picture, and the reality. A painting occupies a position half way between the unsubstantial, uncertain, self-supported vision of a thing and the thing itself. Now when Lavinia gave him such refusals his *hope* of success became more vivid. When she spoke of her chastity and gave excuses that were no real excuses to him, she only aggravated his passion and seemed to be artfully drawing him on; and only to refuse him. It was as if she had painted the picture of his success with her own hands, or in her own person, and held it up before him.

She made herself a “painted hope.” This is simply a hope whose pictures are more vivid, more real, than the uncertain visions of hope unassisted.

Demetrius is telling this to his equally low-minded mother to arouse her anger. The point of view is that Lavinia, in thus refusing the royal son, was making light of the queen’s royalty. Demetrius, in this regard of privileged sonship, is like Cloten in *Cymbeline*.

#### EMENDATIONS

JOHNSON and STEEVENS.—And with that painted braves  
your mightiness.

COLLIER MSS.—And with that painted shape she braves  
your mightiness. R. GRANT WHITE—And with that faint  
hope braves your mightiness. CARTWRIGHT—And with that  
painting, etc. ORGER—And with that painted show, etc.  
WARBURTON (1747)—And with that painted cope she braves  
your mightiness (adopted by Theobald). Present-day editions  
follow First Folio as hopelessly corrupt.

## HIGHER ITALY

*King.* . . . . . Farewell young lords;  
Whether I live or die, be you the sons  
Of worthy Frenchmen: let higher Italy,—  
Those bated that inherit but the fall  
Of the last monarchy,— see that you come  
Not to woo honor but to wed it.

(All's Well, ii, 1, 12)

THE very first instinct of aristocracy is to discountenance the upstart. Consider, then, what a king's view would be who was simply the head of the aristocracy of his country. He would hardly hold up for emulation or recognition a new aristocracy in another country; for they would necessarily be people who had achieved their position by the overthrow of the royal line. To his own noblemen he would hardly speak of them as being worthy of consideration.

By higher Italy, the king means the higher classes of Italy. At the time this play was written, "Italy" was nothing more than a geographical name; it consisted of republics such as Venice and Genoa and various little monarchies. The young French noblemen, finding things dull at home and not yet having distinguished themselves in war, were going abroad to take part in one of the wars which

were always going on between these countries. They were fighting, not for a cause, but purely for emulation — this we must keep strictly in mind if we wish to understand this much-mooted passage. They wished to win their spurs among the noblemen of other countries and return home covered with laurels; thus they would keep up the traditions of their own fathers who were essentially men-at-arms. The king is here advising the young aristocrats who are thus starting out. Their whole standpoint, that of emulation, is strongly set forth — “Let higher Italy *see*,” etc. As an exception to what he means by higher Italy, he is careful to add, parenthetically, that he bates (cuts off or excepts) those that inherit but the fall of the last monarchy. He means by this, all those who have recently set up as aristocrats — whose only inheritance is the recent overthrow of a monarchy. The ideal of long lineage must be kept up in a kingdom because it is upon this that the stability of the throne is based. Thus the whole course of history shows us that however much kings may fight among themselves, each will defend the other from an uprising among his own people; and this duty was, in Shakespeare’s day, and much later, the very law of nations. Kings have a common cause; it is as natural as the law of self-preservation; and if aristocracy could be suddenly achieved and recognized there would be constant temptation to overthrow the ruling power.

Even Elizabeth declared to Murray her intention of keeping Mary on the *Scottish* throne when her own subjects rebelled, for she said it was "contrary to Scripture and unreasonable that the head should be subject to the foot." And Catherine de Medici wrote to her "to persevere in the same opinion which you have hitherto maintained, that princes should assist each other to chastise and punish subjects who rise against them, and are rebels to the sovereign." In Shakespeare's day this was not simply a law of nations; it was the law among monarchs themselves.

In the present passage Shakespeare is depicting aristocracy true to life, as it basically was. The king therefore, in giving his first advice to the young noblemen who had just come to his court, naturally held up to them that ideal which is the very hope of kings. It is as if he had interrupted himself to remark:—"Of course I do not mean these upstarts, for we none of us consider them when we think of winning honor." What could be more natural for a king to say under these particular circumstances? The first thing young noblemen should be reminded of is the basic law of aristocracy. However we may differ as to the identity of "those bated" there should be no doubt, upon the most Shakespearean grounds of human nature, as to what is meant by "higher" Italy.

Beginning with Hanmer (1744) and extend-

ing up to the present day, the passage has refused to resolve itself into a general consistency. Coleridge did his best with it and wrote in his notes: "As it stands, in spite of Warburton's note, I can make nothing of it." Many have interpreted "higher" to mean northern Italy; but this has been open to many objections and cannot be made to prove itself. That the word refers to the higher classes of Italy has seemed obvious to others; but the difficulty has been to define "those bated" in a way that would harmonize. Hanmer changed the latter words to "those bastards," and this, after being long used by editors, was favored by Coleridge. Capell made it "those bated ones" in the sense of people reduced in fortune; Bulloch suggested "those fated," Spence, "those baited," Schmidt defined the word as meaning "beaten down." It is now regarded as hopeless and is therefore indicated as such in the Globe. As Gollancz says, "the passage is probably corrupt."

Whatever it is, it is not corrupt.

## THE SPIRIT OF CAPULET

*Capulet.*                    Go to, go to;  
You are a saucy boy. Is 't so indeed?  
This trick may chance to scath you; I know what.  
You must contrary me! Marry 't is time—  
(Romeo and Juliet, i, 5, 87)

THE period in that third line is in the wrong place. It should come after *must*, not after *what*.

Old Capulet has been circulating amongst his guests at the wedding feast, complimenting the ladies and twitting the young ones—all agog with hospitality. Suddenly he finds it necessary to check young Tybalt who is on the point of marring the occasion by picking a quarrel with Romeo. Imagine the gracious and hospitable old aristocrat—he who summarily ordered “twenty cunning cooks” and then referred to the results as “a trifling foolish banquet,”—and let the ear decide just what he said as he exercised his authority over this rash and stubborn young nephew. He said with firmness and plain definite statement, “I know what you must.” He hardly replied with that half meaningless and modern slang-sounding phrase, “I know what.” Or consider the remaining half of the remark as altered by punctuation. Having made his plain state-

ment of authority he exclaimed with fiery brusqueness, "*Contrary me!*" He certainly did not say, "You must contrary me!" This long-drawn-out remark is weak, pleading and complaining; no actor could make anything effective and fiery out of it. Following the shorter sentence, "I know what," it is especially flat; a shorter remark should follow a longer statement — it shows his ire rising. Capulet, as Shakespeare has already let us see, is not a weak complaining sort of person.

Certainly we have been reading and re-editing Shakespeare all these generations without seeing that this is bad work upon the part of the early editor who saw fit to write Shakespeare in this way.

As for authority in punctuating the line, there is none, the loosely punctuated First Folio having only commas, as follows —

This trick may chance to scath you, I know what,  
You must contrary me, marry 't is time.

It is purely a matter of insight, not scholarship. The Globe uses a colon where Neilson (1906) uses a period, but this is all one as indicating a full stop after *what*. As for myself, all the editors in the world might insist upon having the passage as it now stands in standard editions; but I would reply — Not in any Shakespeare of mine.

## HER C'S, HER U'S AND HER T'S

*Malvolio.* By my life, this is my lady's hand. These be her very C's, her U's and her T's; and thus makes she her great P's. It is, in contempt of question, her hand.

*Sir Andrew.* Her C's, her U's and her T's; why that?

(Twelfth Night, ii, 5, 95)

THE Shakespeare reader will here recognize an old friend. This cabalistic combination of letters has withstood the attacks of all the commentators, and all we may know about it now is that it is either "purposely meaningless," or else, if there is a meaning, Shakespeare buried it so deep that no one may ever unearth it.

A critic familiar with Shakespeare's method ought to be able to decide at once, even though he could not solve the crux, that the author is here dealing with a definite meaning. In the first place, he has made these three letters the subject of particular dramatic action. Malvolio, coming down the garden path and picking up the letter which the humorous conspirators have put there, is himself the one whom we are expecting to see made a fool of—"a contemplative idiot" as the mischievous Maria explained in getting up the plot. But just at the moment when we are all prepared to laugh at Malvolio as he maunders over the

meanings of the letter, we are taken by surprise. From the box-tree where they are hiding, there bobs up one of the conspirators themselves with the query of "why that?" Even before the pompous Butler himself is entrapped, one of the conspirators is so struck by something that he falls into the trap.

This sudden turning of our attention, so contrary to the direction in which we were looking for the fun, signalizes these letters to our mind; and Aguecheek's "why that?" is virtually a question for the audience to consider. In the second place, it will be observed that there are four letters. But Sir Andrew pays no attention to one of them; he is interested in the other three. This shows mental action on Sir Andrew's part; the three letters have a particular meaning to him else he would not jump at them and let the other go by the board. Shakespeare did this purposely; he included the superfluous letter just to this end. It is his psychologic mechanism for showing particular mental action on Sir Andrew's part with regard to a meaning. And the "why that?" directs it specifically to the attention of the audience. Thus we see that the three letters are made the subject of a little separate dramatic study to give them the emphasis of action; and after this emphasis on the mind the cue is given that there is a meaning intended.

Such should be our *a priori* theory, as critics.

But the Elizabethan spectator would need no theory. The letters have significance in the fact that they spell *cut*. And if we have followed the play with live interest in every word, we will see that this word is the very one which would be calculated to catch Sir Andrew's attention and arouse his superstitious fancy. The senile Sir Andrew is spending all of his time and much of his money in trying to get the rich Countess to wife—she who was supposed to be the author of the letter. He had finally despaired and had decided to give up and go home when Sir Toby prevailed upon him to stay; and the last thing Sir Toby said to him in the scene where we last saw them, was —

“Send for money, knight; if thou hast her not i’ the end call me *cut*.”

This tremendous declaration, as I have said, was Sir Toby’s final word to Sir Andrew when we saw them last; it comes at the end of the scene. And there is but a short scene between that and their present appearance on the stage. The word, therefore, boding failure to win her, and being deliberately spelled out of the letter, would naturally engage Sir Andrew’s attention. The human mind is just that superstitious. It had been impressed on his mind in connection with the Countess, and these first letters from her supposed epistle could hardly help spelling the word to him.

“Cut,” if it meant the same in Shakespeare’s

day as it does on any farm today, refers to an animal that has been desexed. We see this in "Ist Henry IV," where the Carrier says, "beat Cut's saddle and put a few flocks in the point," the name evidently referring to a gelding. For such a superannuated and harmless old chap as Sir Toby to swear by this word to the aged suitor who was even more senile than himself, was funny in the first instance. Some Shakespeareans, as Clark and Wright, seem to understand "cut" as referring merely to a bob-tailed horse, or to a dog in like condition. But the dictionary, because of the well-known and long established horseman's usage, includes the other. However, whatever we may accept for the meaning, it was the tallest oath Sir Toby knew how to swear, the most reflecting on his much-prized manhood; and the Elizabethan audience, well versed in all such allusions, would hardly need to be hit on the head to see the meaning in it. They would only need to have their attention directed to it particularly; and this Shakespeare did by making it the centre of an ingenious and diverting piece of dramatic by-play. When we consider the surprise of the audience in having their attention directed in the very opposite quarter to that in which they were expecting to find the "idiot," and imagine Sir Andrew bobbing up with this superstitious inquiry, and remember what "cut" would signify as used by an old sporting gentleman like Sir Toby, whose

failing was to imagine himself as being still in the hey-dey of his virility, the whole combination was calculated to make the audience split its sides with laughter.

While this is but the explanation of a trifling comedy allusion, the management and method of the dramatic incident is as deep as any in more serious scenes; it shows Shakespeare's practice of keeping regard for what would naturally be in a character's mind and having the event result from inner action. In Leontes' puzzling soliloquy, which I explained as the turning-point of "Twelfth Night," we saw that frequently the speech and action of a character is but the outcropping of inner action — the words we are expected to see *through*. This is essentially the same, as indeed, are a large proportion of these supposedly meaningless passages.

The reader will now ask — What is the meaning of the letters M. O. A. I. as read by Malvolio? We might as well inquire what what was the meaning of the P which Sir Andrew did not bother about. We should remember that *none* of this has any meaning in itself. The C. U. T. only has a meaning as it appealed to something already in Sir Andrew Aguecheek's mind. The other puzzle serves its purpose for the "contemplative idiot" Malvolio to puzzle over; and as Shakespeare has put no emphasis on it nor signified a cue, we are not supposed to bother about it. But, by

the same reasoning, we are supposed to find a meaning in the other; for we have read Shakespeare to little effect if we do not understand him well enough to know that he never took pains without a purpose.

## THE TIME OF SCORN

but, alas, to make me  
A fixed figure for the time of scorn  
To point his slow unmoving finger at.  
(Othello, iv, 2, 53)

ATTEMPTS to take this figure of speech apart and examine its works have resulted in much disagreement. Partisans of the First Folio, which reads "slow and moving" ask those who prefer the Quarto, how it is possible for a thing to be slow and unmoving. Again, does the imagery refer to a timepiece, a dial? Steevens thought it did; Knight and others have thought that it has no such implication. The difference of opinion still exists, editors of annotated editions drawing upon conflicting notes according to their fancy.

I think the standard modern editions are right in giving the Quarto reading as Shakespeare's and that the reference is to a timepiece. The trouble seems to be that no one has been able to set forth the point of view in a statement that is quite convincing. My own point of view is as follows.

The Germans have an expression, "to write it on the town clock," the meaning of which is to advertise a thing in the most public place. I have always seen it used in a spirit

of ridicule, as when a man has been caught in some misdeed and persists in writing and talking publicly in his own defense, thus spreading his disgrace wider. He writes it on the town clock. As this expression is a folk saying which is probably very old, and as it has been caught up and perpetuated till it is virtually a part of the language, it shows that there is nothing strained or unnatural about it. So there would be nothing unnatural in Shakespeare's expressing public disgrace in a similar way.

But Shakespeare carries it a little farther. Othello feels as if he were the very figure, the symbol, the standard of public reference for marital disgrace. He feels as if his figure or person stood for obloquy itself just as authoritatively as a figure on a clock stands for the hour itself; and when people look at him it is time to scorn. Hence "time of scorn." So deep is his consciousness that he feels as if it were always that time of day with him; hence "slow unmoving finger." This "time of scorn" is a very Shakespearean style of expression, as when Hamlet says "It is the breathing time of day with me," or, as in "Love's Labour's Lost," "What time o' day — The hour that fools should ask." I think that future annotators would supply the deficiency in their elucidation by explaining that this is supposed to be a *public clock*.

As to the literal truth of "slow unmoving"

this is a very good description of the hand of a clock; it is even psychologically perfect when we consider that we are aware through our intellect that the motionless hand is moving whereas our sense of sight tells us that it is not. The Folio reading, however, is mere tautology and un-Shakespearean; for it is hardly necessary to explain that a thing which is slow is also moving.

## GRATIANO'S MEANING

You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;  
You loved, I loved for intermission.  
No more pertains to me my lord than you.  
(*Merchant of Venice*, iii, 2, 201, *Globe edition* 1895)

You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;  
You loved, I loved; for intermission  
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.  
(Neilson 1906)

As will be observed in the above examples, the meaning here is so uncertain that the most scholarly modern editions make of the lines entirely different statements. And in neither case has the meaning of the statement been finally established; it all remains a matter of conjecture.

Theobald (1733) did away with any punctuation after "intermission" and expressed himself so positively, and with such disdain for those who might think there could be such a thing as loving for intermission, that several generations followed him. The resulting statement, "intermission no more pertains to me, my lord, than you," failed to satisfy the intellect of later scholars inasmuch as its meaning is not certain and convincing. And so we find the *Globe* text, whose readings have long been the standard of Shakespearean scholarship, putting

a period after intermission. White and Staunton, in their editions, agree with this rendering. But the explanations that have been offered are so far from settling the matter that the most recent thoroughly edited and scholarly edition, Neilson's Cambridge, goes back to the rendering of Theobald. As for the original sources of the play, nothing can be positively determined by reference to them, because, with the usual loose punctuation of the early printers, there is a comma after *intermission* — neither a full stop to end the sense there nor yet a punctuation which would allow the sense to go uninterruptedly on. Shakespeare's meaning therefore we shall have to decide for ourselves.

My object will be to show that Shakespeare intended to have a full stop, a period or semi-colon, after the word "intermission." If I am to settle the meaning so positively that there can be no more doubt in the matter, it is evident that I must go about it in a way somewhat different from the method of mere verbal conjecture. We shall not, therefore, start in by any quibbling over the word "intermission," what it might or might not mean. I shall simply place a period after it and then turn our attention to the sentence that follows — "No more pertains to me, my lord, than you." If we find that this has a meaning which exactly fits the situation, and which is, upon further view, essential to the scene as a whole, we shall know positively that it is a sentence in itself

and that therefore a period must cut it off from what goes before. It will then be time to consider the sentence that goes before and which ends with "intermission." Here again we shall adopt the method of showing the meaning not merely in character and immediate circumstance, but by the requirements of the scene itself — the very dramatic exigencies as viewed by Shakespeare himself in practical playwrighting. In short, we must go about these matters in a larger way; and if the meaning exactly fits all the requirements, there can be no doubt left.

First, then, let us ask — What does Gratiano mean by saying, "No more pertains to me, my lord, than you"?

This second scene of the third act shows us the happy outcome of the striving of several lovers for the hand of Portia. We have been held in great suspense as the suitors from various countries came and took their chances with the three closed coffers that decided their fate, and finally our solicitude is all for Bassanio whom we see that Portia loves. Bassanio chooses the casket of lead and is successful. Here Shakespeare brings the subordinate characters forward; it is a *grand ensemble* of happy people. Two happy households stand united through their master and mistress; the general atmosphere is that of graceful compliment.

At this happy climax in the fortunes of the principal characters, we now suddenly find, to fill the measure of marriage to overflowing,

that a love episode has been going on between the subordinate characters. Gratiano, a member of Bassanio's train, has wooed Portia's maid, Nerissa. But Nerissa has been very tantalizing in her reply. She is so utterly devoted to her mistress that she has refused to say "yes" to any proposal that might take her away from Portia's household; therefore she made her answer depend upon whether Bassanio chose the right casket. In short, if Bassanio wins Portia the two households will be united, in which case Nerissa will accept Gratiano.

When Bassanio wins, therefore, it is of great moment to Gratiano; and he immediately steps forward to ask his master's permission to be married at the same time. He receives most cordial assent:—

*Bassanio.* With all my heart, so thou can'st get a wife.

Bassanio has not known about this wooing; he does not now know who the lady is. Gratiano does not now tell him at once in a mere abrupt statement; he proceeds to break the news gradually, drawing to the point in the most beautiful general aspect of the situation. Bassanio has won him a wife at the same time he won Portia for himself; therefore Gratiano replies:

I thank your lordship, you have got me one.  
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:  
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;  
You loved, I loved for intermission.  
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.

What Gratiano means by this last line must be evident enough. It is simply his way of saying, by way of graceful compliment, that he has not gone outside of Bassanio's household for a wife. When Bassanio won Portia, her household was annexed to his own, and this included the maid Nerissa; thus the one who pertains in so momentous a relation to Gratiano also pertains to Bassanio. Gratiano is allowing Bassanio to guess the truth while he approaches it with these general statements; and in his large point of view "No more pertains to me, my lord, than you," there is the fine implication that it has always been thus between them. Even in his marriage he has not gone outside of his master's circle of interests; they are now bound by a further tie. This way of looking at things gives the audience an added insight of how happily everything has turned out. And could anything surpass this in the way of happy and graceful compliment?

Gratiano has followed Bassanio faithfully and made Bassanio's interests paramount to his own. The remark, therefore, besides describing the immediate circumstances exactly, is in strict keeping with the speaker's character. It is this loyalty to another that Gratiano stands for in the play. The meaning being plain, it makes this line a statement by itself; and this being the case we see that the preceding line is a statement by itself with a full stop after "intermission."

We may now inquire into the meaning of this preceding line —

"You loved, I loved for intermission."

Here Gratiano gracefully acknowledges that his own love affair is quite secondary, in importance, to that of his master. It is figuratively referred to as a mere time-filling or stop-gap performance. Theobald, who could see no sense in this line as an independent statement, rather disdainfully challenged any one to explain how a person might be said to love "for intermission." Evidently Theobald was not aware that all through Shakespeare's plays there are lovers who love for intermission and clowns who clown for intermission. In recent times critics have become aware that all through Shakespeare's work there is a regular succession of light and serious moods in alternation, the former to give the mind an intermission from the latter. These clowns and lovers are secondary or subordinate to the main action; and in the present case Shakespeare seems to be using a word out of his own workshop. Gratiano, in suddenly obtruding his own affairs in the midst of his master's happy love scene, wishes to say that his little adventure in matrimony is a mere side-issue, quite subordinate, to the main event; he therefore speaks of his own wooing as if it were a thing which would be noted only during the intervals of the other by way of intermission.

Shakespeare, in introducing the extra pair of lovers at the very climax of the scene between Portia and Bassanio, had to be careful not to let it rise to the same plane of interest. It is therefore introduced with a slight touch of humor; for it is certainly humor which affects us when we learn that the tantalizing Nerissa regards love in such a light that she will only marry in case her mistress goes along. The main event is pleasingly aggrandized by this deference of maid and man; and we are pleased by this little glimpse of Gratiano's good fortune, suddenly and shortly introduced. Shakespeare helped to keep it on a lower plane by having Gratiano tacitly refer to it as such; and as the episode is itself in the nature of a diversion from the more serious scene, the dramatist, by this allusion to it as an "intermission" would seem to be speaking out of his own playwrighting policy. But however this may be, we may certainly understand, with no straining of words, that Gratiano means that his love affair is a secondary matter which would only attract attention betweenwhiles. And this is quite in keeping with the self-sacrificing and devoted character which he upholds.

Those who render the passage so that it reads, "for intermission no more pertains to me, my lord, than you," explain it as meaning that Bassanio was incessant in love-making, and Gratiano was the same. We can hardly believe that Shakespeare introduced this pas-

sage to point out that Bassanio was always at it and that his man Gratiano was just like him — always at it. Besides dragging everything down to such a common plane, it destroys that subordination and deference to the main characters which is so pleasing and so dramatically important. I believe I have explained these lines in a way that makes their intention clear; and I have dwelt upon them somewhat at length in the hope that future editions may punctuate in the way which will admit of the meaning which, I think, Shakespeare intended.

Earlier in this scene, at line 191, there is a passage which is the cause of much disagreement and conjecture. It is at the point where Gratiano steps forward to congratulate Bassanio upon his good fortune. Without taking particular issue with any of the various commentators, I might here offer my understanding of the passage, especially as it is different from any view I have seen.

My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,  
I wish you all the joy that you can wish;  
For I am sure you can wish none from me.

We should here ask ourselves — as Shakespeare always asked himself in creating a character — What was Gratiano thinking? He is thinking that if Bassanio and Portia were to have the fullest scope of their desires, if they were to wish without limit, there is one thing that neither of them ever could wish. Neither

Portia nor Bassanio could wish to have the other away. Consequently Gratiano is willing to let them wish anything and he will subscribe to it beforehand; for he is certain that their wishing could never result in separating *himself* from *Nerissa*. For has not Gratiano's possession of her been wholly dependent upon the union of the other two? This is the very basis of the whole episode.

It is another beautiful expression of the four-fold happiness of the two couples; and it is not as ingenious as it might seem, for Gratiano is well aware that if Portia were ever to be separated from Bassanio, away would go Nerissa. It is a thought that lurks deep in his heart—but he is not afraid; he is willing to abide by any fortune they might wish, for he knows they could not wish themselves apart; hence he runs no risk of being separated from his own *Nerissa*.

Conjecture upon this passage began with Hanmer in 1744, but the succeeding renditions failed to satisfy. Staunton paraphrased it, “For I am sure you can wish none which I do not wish you.” Rolfe’s conjecture is that Gratiano was thinking that Portia and Bassanio could wish no joy away from him “because you have enough yourselves.”

## A MASTER OF WORDS

*Wolsey.*                    I do profess  
That for your highness' good I ever labored  
More than mine own; that am, have, and will be —  
Though all the world should crack their duty to you,  
And throw it from their soul; though perils did  
Abound, as thick as thought could make 'em, and  
Appear in forms more horrid, — yet my duty,  
As doth a rock against the chiding flood,  
Should the approach of this wild river break,  
And stand unshaken yours.

(Henry VIII, iii, 2, 192)

THIS passage, according to the Globe editors, contains the one crux in Henry VIII. They mark it on “that am, have, and will be.” Goldlanz, who shares the general uncertainty as to whether the words even “represent” what Shakespeare wrote, notes a certain emendation as follows:— “Instead of ‘*that am, have, and will be*,’ it has been proposed to read, ‘*that am your slave and will be*'; this would get rid of the awkward *have = have been*, but probably the line is correct as it stands.”

Before starting to explain this passage let me ask the reader to place a period or colon after *will be*, and eliminate the second dash so that all that follows *will be* is unbroken in sense. Read now this part, beginning with *Though* and observe that it is all that could be desired in

the way of clear, logical statement and of close grammatical structure.

Next, try to read it according to the present-day punctuation, as above. There is a part that comes between dashes. Try to connect the parts of the statement before and after the dashes and it will be found impossible to make sense out of it. The point of view is contradictory. Shift the dash about, as for instance, before *that*, and try again. It will be found impossible to make a cogent statement out of the passage as a whole by any such means. It would therefore be desirable to have all this part beginning with *Though* a complete and separate statement. But this would require of us to make complete and separate sense out of the three lines preceding; and now the question arises: Can this be done? And if done, can it be shown that this way of reading the passage is what Shakespeare intended? Let us devote our attention then to these first three lines.

The trouble here is what the words "that am, have, and will be," have been taken in a wrong sense. *That*, as here used is not a relative pronoun, but a demonstrative. And the words *am* and *have* and *will-be* are nouns. These of course are the verbal auxiliaries of English; but here, instead of filling their auxiliary functions they are being referred to as such *words*, for which reason they are nouns by use; and this is done to emphasize what Wolsey is professing.

It is an interesting fact — or should be to one who thinks — that the auxiliaries, the help-words by which we are enabled to express the past and the passive, the present and the future, are but forms of *to be* and *to have*. To “have” means to own, to possess. To “be” means to exist, to live. They refer to life and property. As grammatical forms they arise spontaneously out of our deep abiding consciousness of these things that are so important to us. They are equivalent to what we mean when we say “my own,” — our lives and property. These things are so near our consciousness that we make the idea of them our very means of expressing ourselves in those points of view which constitute grammar; or language. The two auxiliaries together constitute what we mean by “my own”; and in this passage they are used as being equivalent to the words Wolsey has just said — “More than mine own.”

Now the question arises — Why should Cardinal Wolsey, in the course of a profession of loyalty to the king, and especially at the very point where he has begun to see that the king suspects him, go off into a reference to language in the abstract — mere forms of speech. For this there are several reasons.

First, because it is in character. The Cardinal is a man of dialectic training; his specialty is speech. As the king replied to a preceding remark, “You *say* well”; and again, replying to the next declaration of the churchman:

'T is well said again;  
And 't is a kind of good deed to say well:  
And yet words are no deeds.

When Shakespeare creates a man whose education and calling are essentially polemical, as Archbishop Scroop for instance, or Polonius, he is careful to bring out that mental bias. Consider the Archbishop, in the position of a soldier, weaving subtleties of thought as he answers Lord Bardolph regarding his reasons for rebellion, or Polonius in his wanderings with words. Now while Cardinal Wolsey is a quite different man from these, he is nevertheless a man whose education has consisted of the study of language, both as a linguist and as a diplomat, and of points of view that are fundamentally metaphysical. Why then, should he not, in an occasional side remark, betray that lifelong training? Why should he not drop a remark which would fit *his* character exactly though it would not be natural to someone else? A dramatist must take these opportunities of characterization, of deft touches to the dialogue as circumstances arise. In no other way can a character be built up and held lifelike before us.

Second. Wolsey, on the very verge of being accused of treason, must put his profession of loyalty with the utmost weight. To say that "for your highness' good I ever labored more than mine own" is not particularly striking or convincing. It is just a commonplace statement; "mine own" is a worn phrase; it does

not put any vivid emphasis on the speaker's complete, self-sacrificing devotion. How is Shakespeare going to do this? — by a long and wordy passage enumerating the Cardinal's life, his property, his every joy and possession? Not here, for two reasons — first, because such a categorial and conscious emphasis would only make the Cardinal's declaration weak, and, second, because Shakespeare being a poet, must exercise his greatest power, which is that of condensation. The Cardinal therefore appends to this "mine own," a short meditative remark intended to be thrown out as synonymous with it — "that Am, Have, and Will-be." What does this say? It implies the Cardinal's life and property and very instinct of existence. It does more than this; it not only says it but puts signal emphasis upon "mine own." For this little remark alludes to the fact that all men, all other men, have the selfish instinct of clinging to life and property to such an extent that it is part of the very means of expression — of the mind itself. To give such a view of what "mine own" means, as the Cardinal conceives it, is to imply at one artful stroke that he labors for the king's good to the forgetting of his entire instincts of self. Thus it puts the emphasis in a place where stress of circumstances require such art, and in a way that is quite in character.

Third. Cardinal Wolsey, though a churchman by profession and training, was really a

politician, and a statesman of no mean capacity. He devoted his effort to most practical and worldly ends,—wealth and power. At this particular stage of the plot, the king is beginning to have his suspicions. He expresses them to Lovell:

If we did think  
His contemplation were above the earth,  
And fix'd on spiritual object, he should still  
Dwell in his musings: but I am afraid  
His thinkings are below the moon, not worth  
His serious considering.

This shows what the problem of political success, as it presented itself to the Cardinal, consisted in. It consisted in a studied simulation of being entirely absorbed in spiritual and scholarly "musings." Wolsey gradually worked forward to wealth and power under cover of learned and religious preoccupation which averted suspicion of his motives. Note that line, "he should still dwell in his musings." Shakespeare thus shows what the king's impression had been. We thus see the daily problem of the Cardinal's life; it was to assume the guise of the cleric and the bookman entirely engaged in things abstract and metaphysical. In order to achieve his ends he had to keep before him the conveying of this impression.

We thus see that such a line as that we are engaged upon would, from purely practical considerations, be an excellent thing for the Cardinal to say. It is a side-remark, a "musing," and the more seemingly abstract

and preoccupied with scholarly thought the better. But what it really says is far from being a mere scholar's digression; it says wonders and in a most effective way. The Cardinal is here simply keeping up the impression he had always created. And how is Shakespeare to represent character vividly except by such strokes of dialogue?

I have already explained, in dealing with Polonius' declaration of utter devotion to King Claudius, the great power of a preoccupied side-remark (if studiously selected) to carry conviction of sincerity — to flatter or convince. Wolsey is here doing the same thing and in a like connection, a declaration of loyalty.

Fourth. Shakespeare was *himself* deeply interested in language itself as betraying the very fundamental psychology of the human mind, unconsciously expressed — its primeval native poetry and ways of looking at things. We have not read Shakespeare with much insight if we have not gathered his interest in language itself as a study in mind. This I have explained in another place in this book. The present line, viewed according to my explanation, is just what *he* would produce when occasion offered.

Dialogue has its greatest power when, besides telling the story, advancing the plot, and unfolding character in the light of circumstance, it also says something which is intrinsically interesting. This was Shakespeare's way of

working; he could do all these things at once and at the same time strike out universal truths which are worth considering in themselves. Such a line as this is utterly Shakespearean.

What Wolsey is saying, therefore, is an observation on language, the sense of it being as if he had put it — “that Am, that Have and that Will-be.” After catching this grammatical construction, it is only incumbent upon us to have sufficient insight to see the deep truth involved and its practical fitness here to plot, character and circumstance.

But, from what I know of the temper of Shakespearean criticism today, especially in America, this is a view which will not willingly be received. Shakespearean criticism in this country and England is nothing positive or constructive; it is simply a self-conscious protest against the so-called “metaphysical” efforts of German criticism. A certain attitude having become the fashion, critics carry this mere practical playwrighting view of Shakespeare to such an extreme that we would not allow him to have an idea of any kind. It is a mistake. The *common-sense* attitude toward Shakespeare’s text is easy to assume; it explains nothing worth while and is simply another name for mediocrity.

But despite what I am aware of, I am willing to put the present view of Shakespeare’s mind on paper and let it stand and bide its time. In the meantime, what are we to conclude about

the passage? What we will have to conclude, in the end, is that the line has this meaning or none at all. By no means of punctuation can this whole passage be made one sentence. It will remain a "crux" so long as this is attempted. It is destined never to have any grammar or any sense according to past and present methods of procedure. But as soon as we put a period after the first three lines we have a statement which is clear and grammatical and in all ways consistent. This, therefore, is what Shakespeare wrote and what he intended to have us understand.

In *Tamburlaine* we read (Act iii, Scene 3):

Well said, Theridas! speak in that mood;  
For *will* and *shall* best fitteth Tamburlaine.

Here we see Shakespeare's great contemporary, Marlowe, who was, more than any other poet, his model, using the auxiliaries as nouns for dramatic emphasis. The italics, which signalize the sense, are not my own. Mark, too, the play on the grammatical term "mood," which drives the sense home.

Shakespeare was doing the same thing. But he did it in a much greater way by making the words fit the *character* of the speaker and at the same time giving them organic relation to the *plot*—an ability which, more than any other, marks his great dramatic genius.

I have suggested that the words be capitalized—"that Am, Have, and Will-be." It

would probably be well for editors to print them also in italics. If the reader finds that he is not now able to catch the deep art in this way of saying "mine own," let him re-read what I have said about the nature of the auxiliaries—or, for a fuller and more intimate exposition, he might refer to what is said about the poetry of the auxiliaries in my "Essays on the Spot."

## PIONED AND TWILLED BRIMS

Ceres, most bounteous lady, thy rich leas  
Of wheat, rye, barley, vetches, oats and pease;  
Thy turfy mountains, where live nibbling sheep,  
And flat meads thatch'd with stover, them to keep;  
Thy banks with pioned and twilled brims,  
Which spongy April at thy hest betrims  
To make cold nymphs chaste crowns; and thy brown groves,  
Whose shadow the dismissed bachelor loves,  
Being lass-lorn; thy pole-clipp'd vineyard;  
And thy sea-marge, sterile and rocky hard,  
Where thou thyself dost air.

(*The Tempest*, iv, 1, 64)

"Pioned, adj., a very doubtful word, variously interpreted as, 'covered with the marsh marigold,' or simply 'dug.'"

(Globe ed.)

"Twilled, adj., a word of which the meaning is unknown. It has variously been supposed to signify 'covered with sedge or reeds,' or 'ridged,' or 'fringed with matted grass,' or 'smeared with mud'!"

(Globe ed.)

A COLD (dispassionate) nymph is spoken of as being crowned in the spring. This crown is, of course, a wreath. In order to make a wreath we must weave together long stems of grass or reeds and stick the flowers in the crown thus formed. This is especially necessary when we are working with brittle stemmed or fragile flowers. Shakespeare covers the marge of the stream with pionies (formerly spelled so) and twills or reeds and sedge with this end in

view. As the object is to crown these nymphs, he is careful to furnish the raw material.

Let us take a more comprehensive view of what Shakespeare is doing here. He is taking account of *every sort of soil* which the country affords. In each case he considers, first, the nature of the crop, and, second, what that crop is used for.

He begins with the “rich leas.” This is meadow land — not soggy or flat undrained meadow land but such soil as is necessary to the production of the grains.

Next he considers the “turfy” mountains. These produce short grass in patches, and this grass serves for the sheep because they can bite shorter than any other domestic animal and are natural climbers.

Next he speaks of the “flat meads.” A flat mead, undrained and low and unsuited for other purposes, produces a rank growth of grass, usually marsh grass, which lays over in one direction like a thatched roof. This makes hay which will serve “them to keep” — it will support the sheep in winter when they cannot crop the mountainsides. The particular kind of stover he means is vividly indicated by its being “thatched.” This is the natural product of a flat unmown mead.

The groves, brown after harvest time, and the vineyard, do not need to be described with regard to their product, and so with the sterile sea-marge which produces nothing.

He has here taken account of all the kinds of land there are, from an agricultural standpoint, except one. That is the waste land at the steep banks and water-soaked edges of streams. As he has, in each preceding instance, considered the kind of land, what its products are and what the crop is used for, it is reasonable to expect that he is going to do the *same with this*. The waste land along the edge of the stream, where nature herself has full opportunity, produces wild flowers, sedge and reeds. These are useful to make wreaths — “chaste crowns” for virgin nymphs.

Therefore, without any etymological assistance at all, we can see that a “pioned” bank is one [covered with pionies, and a “twilled” bank is one woven with reeds and sedge.

In weaving, a twill or quill or tweel is a small hollow reed on which the weaver winds his thread. Shakespeare evidently spoke of these sedgy and reedy banks as twilled because the word is reminiscent of weaving; the reeds are to weave crowns for nymphs.

## MY BROTHER GENERAL

*Archbishop.* My brother general, the commonwealth,  
To brother born an household cruelty,  
I make my quarrel in particular.

(2nd Henry IV, iv, 1, 95)

SPEDDING wrote to the Cambridge editors, who were looking for help in the solution of this passage, "Conjecture seems hopeless in such a case." Clark and Wright accordingly said in their notes to the play, "On the whole we are of opinion that several lines have been omitted, and those which remain displaced, and that this is one of the many passages in which the true text is irrecoverable." In keeping with this view, the Globe edition has the first line of this passage signalized with the dagger; and other editors seem to regard all proposed readings as mere conjecture.

The passage is open to two possible interpretations. One is that the Archbishop is addressing Westmoreland as the General of the king's forces; the other is that the Archbishop, at the head of his rebels, is referring to the commonwealth as his brother in general for whom he intends to fight. Most editors have taken the former view; but more recently, Clark's paraphrase, which prefers the

latter, is considered, as Gollancz says, "as good as any." The difficulty is that when we consider the Archbishop using "general" simply as the military form of address it is impossible to account satisfactorily for the rest of the sentence; and as to the other view — that the Archbishop is referring to the commonwealth as his brother in a general way — no one seems to have been able to prove, to the general satisfaction of editors, that this is what Shakespeare intended. Hence the continual doubt and the conclusion that the passage is hopeless.

There ought to be no doubt of the meaning here. The use of antithesis is characteristic of Shakespeare: it is a device by which he most quickly defines his own meanings and points out to us, by various arts in its use, whatever he wishes particularly to set forth. In this passage we find "brother general" balanced off with "brother born"; and as there can be no doubt as to the meaning of the latter, so there can be no doubt as to the sense of the former. Again, the word *general* calls our attention to the word *particular*. Besides this, "brother general" when understood as meaning the commonwealth or public weal, stands in apposition to "household" or private weal. There is here a triple antithesis showing that Shakespeare knew that we would take "general" in the military sense, but wished to enforce it particularly upon us in the other sense.

If this is not quite conclusive, there is a

question of character-drawing to consider. Shakespeare's people must always speak in character. The speaker here is an Archbishop. He represents that religion of which the very basis is brotherhood as founded on the fatherhood of God. As a Christian, he is not only a brother to any man *as a man*, but, because an Archbishop had co-ordinate political power in the English government, and held this authority because he represented Christianity in the large, he would properly speak of himself from the very Christian standpoint of being a brother in general to the commonwealth. This point of view would be quite natural and would serve to keep his calling before us.

But a view of the plot itself will unfold to us still more plainly the meaning of these words and of the passage as a whole. These three lines are the Archbishop's answer to a question which began sixty-four lines before. It is a very biting question. The gist of it is simply an inquiry as to why a man of God, who stands for the idea of love and peace, should be leading rebels to bloody war. The Earl of Westmoreland speaks for a space of twenty-three lines in asking it, piling on the invidious contrast between the Archbishop's proper calling and his present one.

The two men, the Archbishop and the Earl, stand facing each other on the field of battle, or rather in the rebel camp. Aside from the embarrassment of Westmoreland's caustic way

of characterizing his present position, the Archbishop is in ticklish straits and he does not know exactly how to answer. His chief grievance is that the king has ignored him and has refused to give him personal audience when he wished to present a written protest and demand justice against those who had killed his brother Scroop. The king has always put him off and dealt with him through others, and not as if he were a peer of the realm; and this is the real grievance that has caused the Archbishop to raise forces for the rebels. This being the case, it will readily be seen that the Archbishop, who still has his written complaint and insists upon presenting it to the king, is not going to tell his troubles, willingly, to this man whom the king has sent. Westmoreland is one of those whom the prelate is jealous of.

Another feature of the Archbishop's situation is that an important detachment has failed to arrive. Northumberland has failed to come with his forces and has sent excuses instead; and this makes it look dubious for the rebel cause. Besides this, the churchman is essentially a diplomat, anyway, even in his making cause with the rebels; he hoped thus to get the church properly recognized by the king by this bold show of force. He did not go to war so much as a soldier as a shrewd schemer, and with this sudden turn of affairs, in which the much-expected Northumberland

seems to have more discretion than valor, the Archbishop sees himself in a precarious position. There he is at the head of a lot of rebels, and the king demands an accounting. His situation is full of risk; and possibly he may, after all, get what he wants if he does not seem to weaken and at the same time gives a mollifying reply.

His answer is a masterpiece in the art of saying nothing; or, at most, of saying something in such an ingenious and evasive way that it amounts to nothing definite. All he makes plain is that he insists upon being received and listened to by the king himself.

The Archbishop's reply, of thirty-five lines, is an interesting study in Shakespearean art. He really has nothing to say to Westmoreland, but he starts in promptly as if he had. It is a case of saying nothing and having to think it up as you say it. He begins with large abstract views of human nature. He has a theological abstraction all ready and he feels his way along with great polemical ability. He gains time, while he is thinking, by making a side allusion to the way of King Richard's death, also vaguely and theologically considered; then he gets into other all-inclusive abstractions which approach a little nearer to his obscure grievance. Suddenly he decides that it is time to seem more pointed and definite; and so, as if all this had been a carefully weighed and profound introduction, he says,

"Hear me more plainly." The inference is that he has already said it with scholarly depth. After this announcement of becoming more plain, he goes on in a way no less ruminative and abstract except that he does let it out that the king has not given him a proper hearing regarding certain things he has written down, as he says — but the nature of which he does not mention.

The Archbishop's whole course of procedure had been essentially politic from the first. The king was not according the church the influence it had been used to as a co-ordinate branch of the government; the Archbishop was being superseded in power by other noblemen; and this was brought to an issue through the churchman's attempts to get a hearing regarding the case of his brother. Now that things had miscarried in war and come to a most ticklish pass, the Archbishop had to temporize in talk and gently feel his way. He could hardly reply that the *king himself* was the cause of his grievance, and he did not wish to go too far in antagonizing Westmoreland. What sort of reply could he make? He had to be careful. Hence his assuming so fully the tone of a Christian and a wise and really peaceful prelate.

Some critics have regarded this long rambling reply as a key to the Archbishop's character — weak, vague-minded and verbose. This is a mistaken view. Such things must be looked

at in the light of circumstances. To not say anything, and yet not to insult Westmoreland by refusing to talk to him; to keep up his character as a reverend, beneficent churchman and yet make it seem consistent with his present bloody calling; to seem not to weaken and yet hold the way open for a possible reconciliation with the king — all this was a difficult thing to do. Altogether the Archbishop did very well. It behooved him to take a shrewd tack in view of the non-arrival of Northumberland's forces.

The reply, however, does not mollify Westmoreland. He summarily and flatly denies that the Archbishop has been slighted in any way and that the other noblemen have come between him and the king. Westmoreland's answer is short and forceful.

The Archbishop sees that he has got to seem more definite and at the same time put a better face on his present dubious position. Here he brings forth his final artistic answer to the question begun so long before.

My brother general, the commonwealth,  
To brother born an household cruelty,  
I make my quarrel in particular.

His referring to the commonwealth as his brother keeps up his beneficent Christian character. His statement that his brother in general has been cruel to his brother born, and his wording this as an "household" cruelty, is a most powerful and skilful turning of the issue in a direction which would excuse him in

his dangerous course. It is the “commonwealth” (not the *king*) that has done him wrong and needs chastisement; and he, the Archbishop, is righting an “household” (not a *political*) grievance. That is, it is the killing of his brother, a thing which struck him in his household, his very home, which has caused the Archbishop to take this armed action for justice. This is wonderfully well done. He could not recede from his real political motives in a shrewder way; it is entirely calculated to put his whole revolt in an excusable light and propitiate the king.

In reading such passages we have to stop and remind ourselves that they are not history, not the actual words and scenes from the lives of men, but purely Shakespeare's invention. There is a touch of humor in the plight to which the Archbishop is brought in making “the commonwealth” his quarrel “in particular.” But the venerable prelate had to make some show of getting down to the final particulars.

The passage as a whole is very simple in structure, as can be seen by leaving out the parenthetical middle line. It may be regarded as abstract in its nature; but it is none the less simple as a sentence and definite in meaning.

The punctuation of the Globe edition is as follows:

My brother general, the commonwealth,  
To brother born an household cruelty,  
I make my quarrel in particular.

Neilson (1906) in his Cambridge edition, has it differently. Note the period.

My brother general, the commonwealth,  
To brother born an household cruelty.  
I make my quarrel in particular.

A comparison of these two modern texts will give the reader an idea of the confusion that still invests the passage after so many generations of criticism. Knight tried to make sense of it by dint of exclamation marks.

How Clark and Wright could think that any lines had been "lost" I cannot imagine. There is nothing fragmentary about these well-connected lines. If Shakespeare had it at all different in acting, the change consisted merely in cutting out the parenthetic line, as its absence in the Folio would indicate.

## THE MYSTERY OF HAMLET

THERE is not so much “inconsistency” in the conduct of Hamlet as is generally supposed. To show this I shall take a number of the most contradictory-seeming passages and explain them according to the one central idea. The character and conduct of Hamlet is utterly *natural*. That is where the greatness lies.

Up to the meeting between Hamlet and the ghost, there is nothing in his character which strikes us as unnatural; but after that strange “inconsistencies” arise to puzzle the commentators. All these are easily explainable. We cannot, however, make the least progress in the understanding of the true inwardness of the play until we have realized that Hamlet is a man who has been *incapacitated to have emotion*.

This gives rise to a peculiar state of affairs. To witness a display of emotion upon the part of others was a torture to him because it reminded him of the faculty which he had lost. It made him feel poignantly the difference between himself and other men, a terrible state of isolation; and not only that, it confronted him continually with a live contrast between his former self and the man he had now become.

Emotion is our source of inward relief. A man who cannot have it does not want to be always faced by those who can; it calls up an inward lack which is nothing less than painful. Hence Hamlet's feeling that the world was "mocking" or "outfacing" him. It is here, in this inward state of affairs, that the whole tragedy lies.

Let us begin our insight of this by taking up those impassioned lines regarding Hecuba — the scene between Hamlet and the traveling actors (ii, 2, 576). Shakespeare has here introduced, for the particular purpose in view, the most vivid and high-wrought eloquence of primitive tragedy. It is intended to rouse the blood. Immediately the players are gone a soliloquy begins:

*Hamlet.* Ay, so. God buy ye. — Now I am alone.

A while Hamlet berates himself for not having a feeling over his own real tragedy like that the actors are able to work up over a mere fancied one. Then note what follows, remembering always that Hamlet is *alone*. He breaks out —

Am I a coward?

Who calls me villain, breaks my pate across,  
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face,  
Tweaks me by the nose, gives my the lie i' the throat  
As deep as to the lungs, who does me this?  
Ha!

This means that Hamlet is trying to work up some sort of emotion in himself. In order to

do so he imagines some insulting adversary, and he heaps upon himself the most unbrookable indignities that one man could perpetrate upon another. They would move the ire of a slave. Hamlet, by a strong effort of imagination, conceives such an adversary before him; and all because, being unpregnant of emotion, he hopes to stir up within himself the beginnings of a live passion. It is like priming a dry pump. By this artificial means he hopes to strike the live springs of emotion and set his human nature a-working; but it is no use. For after that tragic "Ha" (as if he were on the point of drawing his sword) it all comes to nothing; and he reflects —

Swounds, I should take it; for it cannot be  
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall  
To make oppression bitter, —

But Hamlet does not give up so easily. From this attempt to rouse his feelings with an imaginary opponent he now turns his mind to his real enemy, the king. He makes a grand effort at passionate feeling, as can be seen by the tirade of epithet he launches himself into.

Bloody, bawdy villain!  
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villian!  
O, vengeance!  
Why, what an ass am I!

The effort fails — it is mere words. The epithets strike Hamlet as vain and ridiculous because they do not lead on to action; which is to say, they have not moving passion behind

them. Hamlet is a man who, as I have said, has been *incapacitated to have emotion*.

We must remember, in reading this outburst, that it is not genuine; it is a mere experimental attempt. Shakespeare has artfully paved the way for this interpretation by preceding it with the effort at feeling against an imaginary opponent. That was a mere trumped-up emotion; and so is this. Shakespeare is very organic in his sequences.

We have now considered a very large unit in the organism of the play as a whole; and the principal idea in this unit, which includes the player's lengthy speech and Hamlet's experiments afterward, is to enforce upon us deeply the idea of Hamlet's incapacity to have emotion — a faculty which he had lost. We see that he feels the lack poignantly; the very inner hollowness is a pain. It was done very systematically; first by a strong contrast between the mere actor who could have "tears in 's eyes" over nothing but the live working of his own sources of emotion, and the incapacity of Hamlet to get such relief even when he required it in actual life. And the complete artificiality of his tirade against the king is enforced upon us by preceding it with an effort which is unmistakably, ostensibly, artificial. Shakespeare works in large units which are organic in every small detail, and which in turn make up an organic whole. We cannot read him to the best advantage unless we

have an eye for the central ideas which these larger units or divisions are primarily engaged upon. The richness of the poetry, and the multiplicity of side-lights which are struck out, must not blind us to the masterly progress, the larger main trend.

But Shakespeare could do more than one thing at a time; these actors are going ultimately to be used for the shrewd detection of the king's guilty conscience. I must point out, however, in order that the reader may not get issues confused, that this purpose has hardly been hinted at. So far the actors serve purely for the effect we have been observing; but suddenly, when Hamlet's efforts at feeling have proved vain, he says, "Foh! about my brains," and then the action takes a new turn. Their further purpose is revealed to us. For as Hamlet lives in the cold light of reason, bereft of all other relief, he is quite at home in a deep, canny piece of detective work.

Let us now turn to another very inconsistent-seeming passage and note the same meaning behind it. I refer to the passage containing that beautiful description, "this majestic roof fretted with golden fire" (ii, 2, 310). Hamlet says to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, "I have of late — but wherefore I know not — lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercise; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most

excellent canopy, the air, look you, — this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire — why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours."

How, the reader must ask, could Hamlet spontaneously produce so surpassing a description — one, indeed, which moves our own feelings in its beautiful and joyous conception of the universe — if, as he says, he has not the least feeling for it? If he does not see it that way, but is filled only with the vision of a "sterile promontory" and a "foul and pestilent congregation of vapours," what could prompt him to such sufficing eulogy? Is this true to human nature? Hamlet has here contradicted himself twice.

But note what follows:

What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving, how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me, — no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

Again we must ask the same question. How could any man be prompted to such full expression of admiration if, as a matter of fact, he did not feel the delight he expresses?

Shakespeare is here enforcing upon us again the fact that Hamlet had lost his capacity for emotion. I say lost, because he formerly had it. He is here speaking out of his former self —

the remembrance of what the world once was to him. He is doing his best, in all these words, to stir up some vestige of his too-well-remembered æsthetic pleasure in the universe; but it is no use. This is the most tragic phase of his situation in life — to be a dead self. His intellectual faculties are unimpaired; he sees how these things might be enthusiastically viewed because it is out of his own former experience; but the saying of it does not move him. His emotions are but a memory. We thus see that this speech is quite true to nature, utterly consistent.

Before we proceed to a further example, the reader will probably be interested to observe that in this instance, as in the one we have just been considering, Shakespeare has paved the way to the point of view. Wishing the mind to follow a certain course he takes hold of it at once and creates the point of view beforehand, as it were, in a short unmistakable form. Having forced the mind to take that attitude, he now leads it through a slightly longer course of the same point of view. And now, having got us going in the direction he desires, so that we not only read but understand *while* we read, he launches into the full rich expression which is necessary to attain life and vigor. That is to say, Hamlet at first expresses his contradictory state of mind very briefly — “this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory.” This we seize at once. He

then goes through this point of view in just a little longer form:—"this most excellent canopy, the air, look you — this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire — why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours." Now we are following him; and he lets loose that replete and ascending passage on the beauty of man, which finally ends the same; and we catch the point of view with the rapidity and ease so necessary to the drama. It is the rapidity of anticipation. This is a point in the technique of writing which few writers understand. But all great writing should have this devised ease, whether it be drama or not.

The "psychology" of Shakespeare is usually conceived merely as an examination of his characters to determine whether they are true to life or not. But there is a psychology of *writing*; and this is where Shakespeare is deepest of all. He not only understood human nature in his characters but in *us* as an audience to be affected — the art of construction. To betray us into emotional climaxes, we must first be led along and prepared by certain insights, and the way to these must be paved infallibly with a sequence of intellectual steps; and this is plot-making in its deeper and more difficult sense. It is construction, an art of which Shakespeare was the greatest master. The "plot" of a story is an easy thing as com-

pared with its handling, for this latter is the plot against *us*; and Shakespeare, wherever he got the raw materials for his stories, was the greatest plotmaker who ever lived. He makes us take steps which we are scarcely aware of, and an infallible psychology permeates the finest details of his writing. The one end in view advances, not merely through construction in its larger phases, but in the finest details of the work. The psychology of the audience, or of the writing art, is the deepest of all; and this phase of his profundity has not been very successfully dealt with. Most of his commentators do not seem even to be aware of it.

Continuing now the line of thought with which we started out, let us consider the scene at Ophelia's grave. Here, it would seem, is inconsistency in double ply. We may regard it as contradictory in two regards.

First: Does Hamlet love Ophelia? If he does not, why this display of towering passion at her grave? He declares that he loved her more than "forty thousand brothers." If, then, his love for her has continued all this while, so that he now feels it with such overwhelming passion, what are we to think of his preceding course of conduct toward her? In the third act he evidently fell completely out of love with her; and having thrown her over he has not given her the least thought since. There he consigned her with the coldest deliberation

to a "nunnery"—and that so that she shall not become a breeder of sinners. We are there shown at considerable length that he has come to regard her merely in the light of all women, whom he has perceived to be vain, trifling and ungenuine. He rates her with the general run of womankind, so that she is no more than any other of her sex to him. And when we realize that she was wholly unfitted to sympathize with him, and that she handed back his presents for no reason of her own and even consented to act as a stool-pigeon for those who were spying upon him, we can readily understand how Hamlet would feel that he had overrated her. No man could make it more apparent than Hamlet does, that he has completely lost his delusions over a woman. How then are we to harmonize this with the theory that at her graveside he still loves her? This has been a difficult point for critics to handle.

The theory generally accepted is that Hamlet's "bitterness" to Ophelia is not genuine. He sees that their ways in life must part; he therefore parts with her very harshly as being the most merciful course of procedure. As their love must come to an end, he takes steps to put her out of love with him. This theory might be all very well were it not for what follows in their relations thereafter. They mingle freely together; Hamlet does not avoid her but deliberately chooses to lie with his

head in her lap at the play; and then ensues what is known as a part of "Hamlet's cruelty to Ophelia." He trifles with her, even flaunts her; he leads her shrewdly, and to his evident amusement, into a recognition of lecherous allusions which make a mockery of her studied conception of modesty. If any man ever showed that he considered a woman a mere shallow pretense it is here. Having thrown her over, he now shows every evidence that he takes her with the utmost lightness. All this goes farther than there could be any reason for if his intentions toward her are so very beneficent. It is a critical theory without one word of Shakespeare's to support it; and all to harmonize his actions with the theory that he continued to love her and *expressed that love at her grave*. In the meantime she has been dropped so completely out of his life that he has not even thought of her. He has killed her father without so much as a word regarding its effect upon her; and this is less care than he bestowed on Laertes, with whose grief he sympathized. After that trifling and mocking bout between them at the court play, Ophelia seems to drop entirely out of his thoughts; and suddenly we are called upon to believe, in the scene at the grave, that he still loves her! In this case we could wish that Shakespeare himself had thrown a little light on so important a point. It is not his way to be so over-subtle—carrying a point to such an

extreme point of neglect that it is no point at all. As will be seen, much depends upon our interpretation of his conduct at her grave; for all this inconsistency arises out of the critical theory that he is here affected by his *love* of her.

But there is another inconsistency in his conduct which strikes a reader even more strangely. Why this sudden change of front toward Laertes? Hamlet has not had any bitterness of feeling toward Ophelia's brother, but rather the opposite. When he first sees him in this scene he speaks of him as "a very noble youth." And as we see later in the play, Hamlet is so far from having any hard feelings toward Laertes that he feels actual sympathy for him over the loss of his father. Shakespeare, in order to make this state of affairs plain to us, is at pains to have Hamlet explain the basis of his kindly feeling toward Laertes — "For by the image of my cause I see the portraiture of his." That is to say, Hamlet, having lost a father whom he loved, can appreciate Laertes' feeling over the loss of his own father, whom Hamlet inadvertently killed. Hamlet is therefore willing to go to almost any extreme of apology toward Laertes; he does not blame him for feeling bitter but tries to make his own irresponsibility understood. He has so much respect and kindness of feeling toward Laertes that he prizes his good opinion and is willing to make any sort of allowance for Laertes' bitterness toward him. Now in this scene at the grave, Hamlet's feel-

ings are the same; his first thought upon seeing Laertes is that he is "a very noble youth," — a comment that is certainly spoken in a mood of commendation.

But note what suddenly takes place. While Hamlet and Horatio are lying hidden among the tombstones, their presence being quite unknown to the people at the grave, Laertes is very naturally overcome with grief as they prepare to throw the dirt upon his sister, and he expresses this grief feelingly. Immediately Hamlet leaps from his hiding place, jumps into the grave and accuses Laertes of doing all this simply to "outface" him. Whereas it is made plain that Laertes could not have known that Hamlet was anywhere about! Hamlet's mood is not one of sorrow or of love for Ophelia, but purely of rage at Laertes who would thus "outface" him, and of *disdain* for Laertes' expressions of grief!

True, Laertes had called down curses upon the head of him who was responsible for the death of his sister; and this certainly had its effect upon Hamlet. But this does not make the inconsistency any the less. Laertes was simply indulging in natural emotion over the loss of his sister. Therefore how are we to account for the strange mood in which Hamlet took this — his inconsistent-seeming point of view? Even the theory that Hamlet still loved Ophelia does not make it clear and plain. If anything, it would make Hamlet sympathetic

with Laertes' grief; for by the image of his own cause he could portray the other. But Hamlet does not take it in that spirit; he is personally affronted. To say that Hamlet was insane would be an easy way of straightening out many things; but this theory has been cast aside by critics of any insight or standing. Shakespeare has taken too much pains to show that Hamlet is *not* insane; the theory is untenable. Insane men do not make good drama because their motives are so inconsistent and senseless that their actions cannot hold our interest in the plot. It therefore remains to account for this scene upon Shakespearean grounds.

It is all very easy to understand providing we have gathered what Shakespeare has set before us in the preceding acts. He has shown us the same thing in less complicated situations; and if we have caught it in the simpler expositions we will easily enough recognize the central idea in this place, where Hamlet finds himself worked upon by more complex influences. Note the high-sounding and really ridiculous feats which Hamlet proposes the moment the two have been dragged from each other's grasp. Here is the same melodramatic "Swounds" which we saw in a preceding case of the same nature.

'Swounds, show me what thou'l do.

Woo't weep? Woo't fight? Woo't fast? Woo't tear thyself?  
Woo't drink up eisel? Eat a crocodile?

I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?  
To outface me with leaping in her grave?  
Be buried quick with her and so will I;  
And if thou prate of mountains, let them throw  
Millions of acres on us till our ground  
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,  
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an' thou'l mouth  
I'll rant as well as thou.

In the concluding lines, as in preceding instances, we see his recognition of the fact that what he is saying is mere words. Hamlet is a man who has lost his capacity to have emotion. With the whole tragedy of his life facing him in the persons of the king, the queen, and Ophelia, and the spectacle of the relief that they find in tears and wordy tributes, he is driven to do something to find surcease from the pent-up pain around his own blighted heart. He does his best so far as words and activity go; but that is all it is. He starts out with challenges that are reasonably natural if artificial — "Woo't weep? Woo't fight?" He increases the force of his propositions, as if he felt their ineffectiveness, until finally it becomes ridiculous; and suddenly he sees that it is hollow-hearted rant. "Woo't drink up eisel?  
*Eat a crocodile?*"

The psychology of his strange conduct is as follows. Hamlet's heart, early in the play, had been completely broken. He had terrible insights of the world as it *is*; and the shock of this, upon so noble a nature as Hamlet's, had caused the very bottom to drop out of his

soul. Through the experience of hard *facts*, not morbid imaginings, he had lost his faith in womankind, his pride in his family and himself, his whole set of high ideals regarding the world. He had lost all his youthful delusions — his ability to fall in love, his ambitious aspiring to worldly honor, even that moving passion for wild justice, revenge; and in its place was a terrible deep insight of the hypocrisy, the uncertainty, the self-delusions and unfealty of mankind. Tragedy had struck him in the only place it can strike a man utterly — at home. One moment he was an aspiring youth with the highest ideals and the most charitable excuses for mankind; the next moment he was hit a blow on the very heart and he found himself viewing the wreck of a world. In his head was the clear penetrating light of hard fact, the insight of things as they are; and in his heart a dull unbearable pain. He was driven to the point where he would rather be out of the world than in it; for life was a mocking pain.

In tears there is no cure for such a pain. The soft emotion of tears will not erase it; sighs will not blow it away. For this is to be a dead self. In the death of a friend we see the mysterious work of nature and in the mystery there is hope. Tears are its cure. Emotion repays itself for the loss and we cease to weep. We feel that all is well and go on our way enriched in the treasures of our heart. But when a man mourns for what he *knows*, there is no

remedy, no relief. For what a man knows in his heart he cannot forget. To have such knowledge as Hamlet had, and in the way he had it, is to pursue a living death. The pain is numb, hollow and dumb; and when we see others taking the benefit of human emotion it rises and gripes us. Is it any wonder, then, that when Hamlet saw Laertes revelling in a very luxury of grief over a dead sister, and thus finding relief from a pain not half so deadly as his own, he should feel that the world and the very scheme of things had there conspired to pain and mock him. And that it should all seem a travesty as compared with his own case? For him there was no such relief — for he could not feel the emotion. Once we take this view, which is in harmony with the whole drift of the play, Hamlet's words become singularly luminous and consistent.

Dost thou come here to whine?  
To outface me with leaping in her grave?

“To outface me” — If we have understood what Hamlet meant and felt when, after the interview with the Captain of Fortinbras’ troops, he says, “How all occasions do inform against me,” we shall hardly need an explanation here. Hamlet was out-faced by Fortinbras’ youthful activity because it made a mockery of his own lack of motive-power; he was out-faced by the passion of the traveling player because it reminded him of his own inability to have

such feelings; he was outfaced when Rosen-crantz and Guildenstern tried to find out his true state of mind because it recalled his more youthful feelings toward the world and reminded him that he had even lost the power of admiration. And here at the grave we see the most painful out-facing of all. It is all of a piece, and we must understand this scene in the sense that Shakespeare has led up to and prepared us for. These people had not outfaced him purposely; they were the unconscious instruments in the hands of fate. In like manner Laertes, not knowing he was about, outfaced him with the power of consoling grief. The whole world outfaced Hamlet because his insights had placed him in a terrible isolation; he was a man apart from the race. Nothing could be calculated to bring it home to him with more terrible power than this scene at the grave.

Hamlet did not feel any genuine anger against Laertes. There is no more rancor than he felt toward Horatio when he said to him, "Do not mock me, fellow student." Why then this indignation, this mood of rage? The conjunction of affairs at the grave was such as to aggravate his soul into a nameless agony, an unbearable pain which seemed all the more gratuitous because he had done nothing to merit it. He was being tortured and mocked beyond all reason; and when a man is being pained he naturally takes action against the agent of his

torture. His indignation is against the state of affairs, and his protest takes the form of anger because it could take no other. Hamlet does not even offer combat when the enraged Laertes grasps him by the throat; he says rather:

I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat,  
For, though I am not sullen and rash,  
Yet have I in me something dangerous,  
Which let thy wiseness fear. Away thy hand.

The “something” is desperation, not anger. There is here something of the benign attitude of Romeo toward Paris when he was himself on the point of suicide, “Good, gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man.” All this is very natural and consistent. Hamlet is stung to desperation, and he regards Laertes’ high-sounding sorrow as a mere travesty in the light of his own deeper pain; but yet he has no personal feeling against him.

It is a theory which persists from one generation to another that Hamlet has continued to love Ophelia and that he is affected by his present love for her at the grave. In this case we could wish not only that Shakespeare had referred to such a state of affairs during all the interim, but that he would give some hint of it here. Hamlet does not love Ophelia. Instead of any indication of sorrow or assuaging tears, what have we? We have sorrow referred to in the mere form of a challenge. Hamlet banters Laertes to compete with him in various

deeds—"Woo't weep? Woo't fight?" Tears, in Hamlet's mind, are put on such an artificial basis of effort that they are rated in with fighting, with drinking up vinegar and eating a crocodile. Usually, when people feel sorrow, they do not regard tears as a difficult deed to be essayed in manly competition; they shed the tears. Laertes' exhibition of luxurious emotion had "outfaced" Hamlet; the world had again mocked him and touched him to the quick. If Hamlet could have wept he would— even as he would have drunk the vinegar or eaten the crocodile if it could have given his heart relief. He says "I loved Ophelia." True enough, he did— before he found out that she was not his ideal. He had lost her long before; and we do not mourn twice for the dead. It is merely "*the fair Ophelia*" that is being buried here.

It must be remembered that not the least source of Hamlet's inner pain was memory, the recollection of what he had formerly been. More than by his father's ghost, Hamlet was haunted by his dead self. Such an occasion as this, besides outfacing him in the present, was calculated to work on him in that way. He had loved Ophelia, a most poignant memory.

As to his incapacity for emotion, we do not refer, of course, to passing elations of mere intellectual triumph, as when he worms out the secret of the king's guilt—if that may be called emotion. It was the breaking down of all the *vital* relations of life, beginning with his mother,

that made Hamlet's life a tragedy. Which-ever way he turned he was faced by a mother guilty of incest and easy in her love; an uncle who was a murderer and a hypocrite; a love that proved a disappointment; a court that was shallow and merely political. And he was incapacitated to have emotion in the face of the *facts*.

He was a man not only of the profoundest intellect but of the richest and finest nature. If these things had not happened there would not have been the inward tragedy. If Ophelia had turned out to meet his essential ideals of a woman (apart from any ability of hers to take part in his stern business in life) his tragedy would not have been unmitigated. But Shakespeare has taken pains to make it utter and complete; it is most systematically complete. Therefore, to regard Hamlet as still loving Ophelia, or in any way cherishing the ideal, is to work at cross-purposes to the whole intent of the play. "The *fair Ophelia*" — this is his casual comment to Horatio upon his first learning who it is that is being buried.

True, Laertes' emotion is not of the deepest. It is his nature to love display, to be melodramatic. Various critics have noted this with excellent discrimination. What are we then to conclude? — That Hamlet felt real emotion, true sorrow over her death; and that he jumped into the grave out of mere disdain and resentment of Laertes' exaggerated expression of

love? Are we to infer that this is a sort of æsthetic protest over a matter of bad taste? Current interpretations of the incident would leave us in just that state of mind. But this is not the point. Hamlet acted out of pure pain. This is the whole point of the tragedy. It was a pain that always haunted him, but which arose under conditions to a poignancy that was unbearable. There is in his life neither self-pity nor a cherishing of grief, but simple torture. It is a tragedy not of blood but of pain. In it death and blood are of the slightest significance. If we may attribute to it any moral as a whole it is that very frequently in this world it is the best that suffer the most.

The reader will now ask — and it is a fair question — if Hamlet has been incapacitated to have emotion, how is it that he weeps after the interview with his mother and the killing of Polonius? She certainly reports that he wept; and we have no reason to doubt it, for he probably did; and most feelingly. Although I have not space in the midst of these cruxes to write an extended analysis of Hamlet, I can hardly leave this point unexplained and incomplete.

Shakespeare shows us this incapacity progressively, as a growth or piling up of the tragedy, going from the slighter manifestations to the stronger. To show this to the complete satisfaction of the reader let me call his attention to just one more instance, after which we

shall be in a position to understand Shakespeare's method.

The transformation in Hamlet's nature begins with the ghost's revelation at the end of the first act. Immediately afterward we see him talking to the soldiers. By his strange words he feels that he has offended them; and he says —

I am sorry that they offend you, heartily;  
Yes, faith, heartily.

Note how careful Shakespeare is to put a complete lack of heart in those words; and also to show this so immediately after the disillusioning experience. A man who felt no lack of feeling in his words would be satisfied with saying simply "I am sorry they offend you." But Hamlet adds, because he feels this lack, "heartily." But despite this effort to have full feeling, he feels an inward lack; and so he tries it again: "Yes, faith, heartily." This is the same thing we have been noting; it is no use for Hamlet really to try to feel these things which it seems he ought to say and do.

Now there is no doubt that at this stage of his tragic experiences he would be able to feel deeply or even weep over the inconstancy of Ophelia — in fact we do find that he comes to her later in a great state of distraction and dishevelment as a result of her unwarranted and unceremonious "repelling" of his letters to her. But at this particular stage, immediately after

the ghost scene, his revelation has been that of the hypocrisy of men, and this poisons his mingling with his fellows,

It is quite probable that Hamlet wept or was at least overcome with emotion when Ophelia first showed herself inconstant and unworthy. But by the time we see him consigning her to a "nunnery" so bitterly, this is all over. He has learned another lesson; and we do not weep for the dead more than once. Hence his genuinely unfeeling harshness toward her; there has been a revulsion in his sentiments toward women. But yet his mother is left — the one great relation in the world to him. This comes next in order. And naturally when he sees there is nothing in this relation, for she is a difficult case, and when the accidental killing is piled on top of it, he weeps. But never again will he weep over a killing or over a mother. He has gone through that to the uttermost depths of his soul; and only another vacancy is left. From which it will be seen that when I say he was "incapacitated to have emotion," I am referring to what Shakespeare represented, namely, that in any particular case, as it is brought forward and presented, he is incapacitated to have that particular emotion again.

Now, instead of looking at the order of the events themselves, which as we have seen are progressive and growing in power; let us look at the order of the particular passages in which

Shakespeare expresses or shows it to us. It is in the passages that he makes it tacit.

First we see Hamlet, in a mere slight sentence, struggling with a lack of feeling in a little matter of politeness — his relation to his fellow men; next we see this struggle when his dark outlook has spoiled the world in general for him — it comes out in an æsthetic sort of connection with the traveling players; next it has risen in power and we see that he has lost such vital interest in human affairs themselves that he cannot react to the feeling of revenge against the king even when he imagines direct unmanly insult to spur himself on. Finally at the grave scene, the climax, he has gone through it all and he can feel no emotion at all. He makes a terrible effort to be a man among men, to feel the soft sorrow that he feels a human being should experience; but it is no use, his great effort, an extreme writhing under the pain of his condition, is a mere abortion of grief. He has run the gamut; he had sorrowed for Ophelia before. And we weep for the dead but once.

This solves the whole question of Ophelia, the seeming inconsistency of which is so much at the bottom of the "mystery" of Hamlet. So long as critics persist in looking at Ophelia "in the round," seeing her charming points, reasoning that Hamlet loved her to the time of her death and using this as an explanation of the strange grave scene, they will

never solve the “mystery” of Hamlet in the world.

It will not do to follow the modern method of looking at the characters “in the round.” If you want to understand Hamlet you have got to look at things from Hamlet’s standpoint. And this, not in the light of *a priori* theory but of the facts themselves just as Shakespeare presents them. In every case Shakespeare will explain himself utterly, in every scene and passage, to entire consistency; it is only necessary for us to furnish the sympathetic insight and feeling. Hamlet is not a mystery. To say that it must be so, for all time, because “life is a mystery” is entirely beside the point. The same might be said of some other play just as well, so long as it represents life. Anyone can write a play which is a mystery, inscrutable and inconsistent; but great men do not write mysteries. They elucidate. And while I have not space, while engaged upon cruxes, to go fully into Hamlet, I believe that to anyone who has a real desire to understand the play I have here furnished the most valuable first step.

## DEATH'S HERITAGE

Death is my Sonne in law, death is my Heire,  
My Daughter he hath wedded. I will die  
And leave him all life living, all is death's.

(*First Folio*)

Death is my son-in-law, Death is my heir;  
My daughter he hath wedded; I will die,  
And leave him all; life, living, all is Death's.

(*Romeo and Juliet, iv, 5, 37, Modern Editions*)

As will be observed, the first collected edition of Shakespeare's works (1623) has the grief-stricken Capulet say that, as Death is his heir in taking his daughter Juliet, he will now die along with her and leave Death "all life living."

In the standard text of today, he first says he will leave death "all" and then goes on to specify what that all consists of, namely — life, living. Looking at this latter in the effort to find out what it means, we find ourselves feeling about for the distinction intended between those similar words, life, living. As we have to understand the distinction, the best we can make of it, according to all proper word usage, is that "life" means his physical life or existence, and "living" refers to his estate, his means of subsistence. We therefore have Capulet saying that he will die and leave death *his* all,

namely his life and fortune. That is to say his own personal all; — else what can it mean?

But Shakespeare does not mean that. Imagine the grief-stricken Capulet, at the supreme moment of his passionate and inconsolable sorrow, saying that he will leave Death his heir to *all* and then going on in a spirit of specification with such a nonsensical distinction! This is not the language of passion. The line of the Folio has been discarded in favor of an ingenious quibble at a complete sacrifice of vocal delivery; it halts and boggles over its petty point so that no actor could bring it forth as from the human heart.

The Folio says the right thing in just the right way. Death is the heir of all life. The distracted father says that because there is consolation in including the whole world in Juliet's doom and his own. He dies and leaves the whole world to Death, its ultimate heir. It is characteristic of Shakespeare's work (and hereby he is strikingly true to our human nature) that in time of deep bereavement the whole universe is swept along in the stream of personal woe. Lear considers the storm as sighing and weeping in his behalf, Othello addresses the stars, Romeo says, "What less than doomsday is the prince's doom?" We see the world with our own eyes. In such a time old Capulet looks on his daughter and sees Death the universal heir. "I will die and leave him all life living" — this simple remark, at such a time,

is the grand speech of passion. Consider him, on the other hand, perplexing English with anything like this: "I will die and leave him all; life, living." If he means his own personal life and property merely, it is not Shakespearian, for Shakespeare *never* wrote like that; besides which the statement made here is a truism that is little short of ridiculous. Naturally if he died he would leave his life; and if he left his life he would be most likely to leave his living.

For some reason, possibly because they could not get the point of view, editors have not been able to accept and print this line according to the Folio rendition. Capell (1760) made it "I will die and leave him all; life leaving, all is death's." This became the standard for generations; more recently it has settled into the form that we have now. Some early editor evidently thought — for what he thought we can only imagine — that Capulet did not own the world and therefore could not logically leave it to death; for which reason the heritage must be limited to Capulet's personal possessions. At least the line in its present twist does not seem to say anything else. The work of editing Shakespeare has always been done by very conscientious persons.<sup>??</sup>

The most scholarly of modern editions of the play are "based" on the Second Quarto instead of the Folio because the Folio is considered to have been based on it. As a matter of fact

this mental method of "basing" an edition of a play on this early edition or that is largely a fallacy. The Folio has at least 10,000 typographical errors and the printers of the Quartos were no more dependable. All of them are useful for reference and comparison, but that is all; for we know too little about the authority of any of them. The final edition of Shakespeare will have to be based on good judgment and Shakespearean insight.

## THE PLEASE-MAN'S SMILE

That smiles his cheek in years and knows the trick  
To make my lady laugh when she's disposed,—  
(Love's Labour's Lost, v, 2, 465)

I HAVE no doubt that the “yeares” of the Quarto should have been *yours* (yours) — a printer’s error easily made.

The whole theme of this long passage is *privacy* of understanding, intimacy between two persons with regard to some mutual secret; and Shakespeare’s word-picture of the character sticks strictly to this idea throughout. The secret of the masque has been given away beforehand to the ladies who were to be tricked, and Shakespeare here characterizes, with many quick, live word-pictures, the sort of ladies’-man who would busy himself with carrying the tale to them — he is “some carry-tale, some please-man, some slight zany, some mumble-news, some trencher-knight, some Dick.” Then follows the characterization quoted above.

Some such ladies’-man (we are familiar with the type) made it his business to go and confide to them what was brewing. Setting Shakespeare entirely aside now, and referring simply to our own knowledge of human nature, what always follows in such a case? What is the please-

man's reward? There ensues a period of intimate understanding between the confidential fellow and the ladies; he can converse with them by their shrewd understanding of looks and nods; there is great traffic in winks and smiles; and all to the complete mystification of third parties who are not in the secret. It is especially mysterious to other gentlemen who do not seem to be on so intimate a basis with the fair. This is the please-man's reward; and Shakespeare would not have made a live picture of him at all if he had stopped with those epithets and not drawn them to some climax of particular and pat description. This he does in describing him as one who "smiles his cheek in yours," the meaning of which, as I would understand it, is as follows.

A man who smiles his cheek in yours is one who, entirely because of some mutual understanding, and without any necessity of words, makes you smile when he does, or smiles answeringly when you do — as in a mirror. His smile is at once translatable in the light of the mutual secret; the other smiles in return; the smile of his cheek goes directly into yours as in a looking-glass. Because of this directness, without any other medium than the smile, and because the smiles evidently have the same source, he may be said very truly to be smiling his cheek in yours. The line, when thus viewed, is so true to human nature that it becomes the very soul and climax of the

characterization. It shows the ladies' pleased man actively at work and reaping his reward.

All present-day texts have it "in years," the explanation being: "smiles his cheek into wrinkles that give him the look of age." This is inharmonious with the whole spirit of the picture; it is foreign to the theme. Why should Shakespeare here drag in the idea of a haggard and aged smile — especially *as* such a smile and with no further connection? It is more Shakespearean to stick to the subject, to keep directly on to the point and drive it deeper into human nature.

Various emendations have been suggested — Theobald thought it ought to be *fleers*; Hanmer, *tears*; Jackson, *yeas*, etc. Furness, in lack of a plausible emendation, agrees with Warburton, Farmer and Steevens that it is "years" referring to a look of age. An understanding of the point in human nature, it seems to me, would have suggested *yours*, which is, after all, the most likely typographical error. Shakespeare uses the word *yours* elsewhere in his work; and hundreds, or rather thousands, of changes in the original text have been made on a less evident basis of typographical error.

The line immediately following this drives home the same meaning — "To make my lady laugh when she's disposed." This immediately makes itself consistent with the context; and there is nothing so Shakespearean as sticking to the subject.

## A LOVE DETAINED

Sister, you know he promis'd me a chaine,  
Would that alone, a love he would detaine,  
So he would keepe fair quarter with his bed.

(*Comedy of Errors*, ii, 1, 107)

THE above is the text of the First Folio, a reading that passed out of use beginning with the Second Folio (1623). All efforts to read this passage as it stands in the original copies seem to be confined to the idea that a "love" could only refer to the woman whom Adriana supposed to be keeping her husband away from his bed; in which case her wish would not make consistent good sense. Hence the substitution of "alone, alone" for "alone a love" in all modern editions.

In my way of seeing it, the First Folio reading makes good sense while the other does not. I think it to be evident in the plays that in Shakespeare's day, or at least in his usage, any love token or remembrance, or any little loving act or thought was spoken of as a "love." This would seem a quite natural usage. For instance, in "*King John*," iv, 4, 49, Prince Arthur quotes himself as comforting Hubert when he was ill —

Saying, ‘What lack you?’ and ‘Where lies your grief?’  
Or ‘What good love may I perform for you?’

Here the word “love” would certainly seem to be used in the sense of an act of love. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ii, 2, 154, Hermia exclaims, “Speak, of all loves! I almost swoon with fear.” This would be equivalent to saying — Of all loving acts you could perform for me, speak. Again in “The Merry Wives of Windsor” we have a like usage (ii, 2, 118) as also in “Othello,” iii, 1, 13, though here the Quarto reading “of all loves” has been done away with in favor of “for love's sake.”

If my understanding of the word is permissible, the “love” referred to is the chain itself which is mentioned in immediate connection, a love token; and this would make the First Folio reading preferable as having more consistency and continuity of thought. And why should not a love-token be spoken of as “a love” inasmuch as it is a separate act of love?

The sense, then, would be as follows. Adriana, who is afflicted with a fear that her husband is being kept away from home by another woman, suddenly remembers that he promised her a chain, which love-token has not yet been forthcoming; and as this fact pops into her mind in the present connection it adds to her suspicions. But immediately, in a woman's mood of being willing to suffer so long as her wrongs do not extend too far, she reflects — “Sister, you know he promised me a chain.

Would that a love alone were all that he would detain from me," etc.

I suggest this reading more especially because the present text—"alone, alone"—does not make satisfactory sense as generally explained. It is supposed to mean simply by himself or away from other women. But when we proceed to the next line the word "so," which must be taken either in the sense of *providing* or of *thus*, does not fit satisfactorily. The first makes utter nonsense and the latter an inane truism. Then, too, the chain is mentioned only to be dropped in a detached sort of way.

It is generally considered that Shakespeare wrote "alone, alone," and that the printer of the First Folio, by getting a letter upside down, turned an *n* into a *u*, which latter was a *v* in Elizabethan times. But it is a rule that works both ways; the printer of the Second Folio possibly turned a *u* into an *n*. In any case, the ingenuity of a typographical theory should not blind us to consideration of character, situation, continuity of sense and literary needs in general.

The same understanding of "love" would clear up that long passage in "All's Well That Ends Well," beginning with i, i, 180. In this case the love tokens, instead of gifts, are thoughts—tokens of the mind. As Ophelia says, "Nature is fine in love, and where 't is fine, it sends some precious instance of itself

after the thing it loves." So Helena sends her whole multitude of emotions, her various thoughts and inward attitudes after the absent Bertram. The fact that so much might thus be cleared up is in itself an indication that there is something in the Shakespearean use of the word which editors have missed.

## ADRIANA'S POINT OF VIEW

I see the jewel best enamelled  
Will lose his beauty; yet the gold bides still  
That others touch, and often touching will  
Wear gold; and no man that hath a name  
By falsehood and corruption doth it shame.

(*Comedy of Errors*, ii, 1, 109)

Keep then fair league and truce with thy true bed;  
I live distained, thou undishonored.

(ii, 1, 147)

THESE passages, which comprise two of the three most famous difficulties in "The Comedy of Errors," are best solved together because they embody the same point of view. Aside from the fact that it has so long baffled students of Shakespeare, the point of view is interesting because Shakespeare here carries to its logical conclusion the biblical view that man and wife are flesh of one flesh. At the same time it is his strongest means of giving us an insight of one of his ideal women.

Adriana believed, in the most absolute and unqualified sense, that husband and wife are one. She believes this just as the theologian believes that the Trinity is one, and with quite as metaphysical a thoroughness. Husband and wife together form a *self*; each half of that

self is the other; neither of them, as an individual, is so great and perfect and beautiful a being as the self that is formed by both. They are, in short, flesh of one flesh; and there is really no self of one without regard to the other. This being true, the facts must have their logical outcome. If a man commits adultery, it is his wife's virtue that is lost, not merely his own.

To this point of view we must add another fact which Adriana took into account when considering her status as the wife of an unfaithful husband. According to the custom of the world, the man is not greatly dishonored. As to this latter, neither does her reputation suffer for his misdeeds; but that is not what concerns her. She is concerned about her virtue in fact, and she does not confuse it with mere reputation. Thus, when he is unchaste, her virtue suffers, and his reputation does not. Shakespeare makes her arguments on this rather unusual point the means of bringing vividly to our minds a fine woman's sense of revulsion toward any violation of the married relation, and this apart from any mere jealousy on her part. He makes this latter plain by placing her in contrast with her sister who is always accusing her of being merely jealous.

The Bible states in so many words that man and wife are "one flesh"; but when Shakespeare follows it out to this logical conclusion it seems somewhat strange and metaphysical.

However, the reason that critics have not been able to come to any positive conclusion as to the meaning of these passages is that they have not entered with full sympathy into the woman's point of view and accepted what is plainly put before them.

The "enamel" of this figurative jewel is her beauty; the solid gold her virtue. As her husband seems to have lost his early infatuation with her she feels that her beauty has faded. While this superficial adornment of a woman may be somewhat worn with her she feels that the solid gold of virtue is left. So much certain critics have perceived, uncertainly; but now comes the crux of her point of view.

That others touch and often touching will  
Wear gold.

She here means that *her own* virtue is being lost by other women touching that of her husband. If we have accepted the point of view which I have stated, this must be perfectly plain; and when we stop to consider it the idea is not so very far-fetched; for virtue is an ideal, a state of inner purity as well as a mere act; and so a woman like Adriana might easily feel that when the virtue of their mutual relation is contaminated her own virtue becomes as nothing. Certainly if she did not have some such feeling her ideals would not be very high; and Shakespeare deals largely with

ideals — “There is nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so.”

and no man that hath a name  
By falsehood and corruption doth it shame.

As a man who has a good name, an ideal character, does not counterfeit and debase gold, so a man who has real virtue will safeguard its purity. This brings us at once to an understanding of the second passage, the solution of which includes the whole point of view that has now been set forth. She is here addressing her husband personally:

Keep then, fair league and truce with thy true bed;  
I live distained, thou undishonored.

This *distained* is the reading of the First Folio (1623), the word at that time having the same meaning as it has now — stained. It is a poetical usage. She is therefore saying that so long as her husband has violated the relation between them, her own virtue has been stained while he has as good a reputation as ever. As commentators could never see how the husband's chastity could be considered as affecting the wife's chastity so long as her own acts were pure, they have considered that *distained* was a printer's error in the original edition. The word was therefore changed to *unstained*, an emendation that has been accepted by editors for about a hundred and fifty years. The change was made by Hanmer, 1744; and the present-day standard among

Shakespeare scholars, the Globe edition, still has *unstained*. We should put back permanently the word as it stands in the First Folio. It becomes consistent as soon as we understand the tenor of Adriana's remarks as a whole.

It is interesting, with this general view of marriage in mind, to re-read "The Phœnix and the Turtle." Here we see Shakespeare expressing the same idea in a more abstract and metaphysical way.

So they loved as love in twain  
Had the essence but in one;  
Two distincts, division none;  
Number there in love was slain.

So between them love did shine  
That the turtle saw his right  
Flaming in the Phœnix' sight;  
Either was the other's mine.

Property was thus appalled,  
That the self was not the same:  
Single nature's double name  
Neither two nor one was called.

Reason in itself confounded,  
Saw division grow together,  
To themselves yet either neither  
Simple were so well compounded.

We here see that Shakespeare worked upon the same essential view outside of his treatment of it in connection with Adriana. Note in the above that "Either was the other's mine," does not simply mean that each *belonged* to the other. It means, as we are now

in a position to understand, that each was the other's *self* — “mine” in every regard that *me* could convey; and in the same thorough acceptance that Adriana regarded married union. This idea was native to Shakespeare's mind; and in the play he simply gave it more concrete illustration. That the critics of all time have been so confused to get sense out of it simply proves our explanation as Shakespearean, for there indeed, as the poet says, we see “reason in itself confounded.”

So far I have done little more than to state the basis of my explanation; but as my proposition is to restore and establish the original text for all time, and give it this wholly consistent interpretation, the reader will want something more in the way of proof. This is easily furnished.

Turn to “*The Comedy of Errors*,” ii, 2, 120 to 131 and hear Adriana lecturing her husband (as she supposes).

How comes it now my husband, O, how comes it,  
 That thou art thus estranged from thyself?  
 Thyself I call it, being strange to me,  
 That indivisible, incorporate,  
 Am better than thy dear self's better part.  
 Ah, do not tear away thyself from me!  
 For know, my love, as easy may'st thou fall  
 A drop of water in the breaking gulf  
 And take unmixed thence that drop again,  
 Without addition or diminishing,  
 As take from me thyself and not me too.

Adriana here gives it as metaphysical a statement as we find in “*The Phoenix and the*

Turtle"—marriage a Duality of two that are one essence just as the Trinity is of three.

But a less ingenious statement will bring it home at once to the everyday intellect. Farther on she makes this very definite statement as to her own relation to other women and her husband's unchastity. She considers it her own disgrace.

I am possess'd with an adulterate blot;  
My blood is mingled with the crime of lust;  
For if we two be one and thou play false,  
I do digest the poison of thy flesh,  
Being strumpeted by thy contagion.

This proves our interpretation of the doubtful passages absolutely. All that she says is consistent with the point of view set down. The "unstained" of modern editions is wrong. Nor must editors who retain "distained" do it upon the basis of Knight who gave it a definition opposite to its sense by considering that Shakespeare was confused in his vocabulary and meant *unstained* from the standpoint of "dis-stained."



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